



PETER DANIEL HUET

Bishop of Fréjus

Dean of the Chapter of Fréjus
Bishop of Fréjus from 1695 to 1731



PETER DANIEL HUET

Bishop of Le Mans

Dean of the Cathedral of Le Mans
and of the University of Le Mans

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A

PHILOSOPHICAL
TREATISE
Concerning the
WEAKNESS
OF
Human Understanding.

By ^(Daniel) PETER HUET, late Bishop of
AVRANCHES.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOSEPH MARSHALL, at the *Bible*, in
Newgate-Street. MDCCXXVIII.

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THE
PUBLISHER
TO THE
READER.

THE Treatise I am now publishing, had appear'd long ago in the World, if the excellent Author of it had thought fit to have made it publick ; but he was so fully perswaded, that the generality of Readers would disapprove his Notions concerning the Weakness of *Human Understanding*, that he could not prevail upon himself to print it in his Life-time ; but
A con-

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contented himself with reading it to his intimate Friends, without exposing himself to the Censures of those whom he often calls the Vulgar of the Commonwealth of Learning.

A Person of Merit, one for whom the late Mr. *Huet* had a very great Esteem, highly recommended this Work to me many Years before the Author's Death, and us'd all his Endeavours to procure me a Copy of it, but all in vain; for Mr. *Huet* would never consent to it, tho' he look'd upon it to be the best Thing he ever wrote. Nothing more plainly shews the Value he had for it, than the Care and Pains he took to translate it himself into *Latin*, after he had wrote it in *French*; which is more than ever he did for any other of his Works. I have obtain'd likewise his *Latin* Translation, which I may publish hereafter, if I find
that

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that the World is willing to receive it ; every Body knows with what extraordinary Care that Prelate had cultivated the *Latin* Tongue, and how elegantly he could write in it.

AFTER Mr. *Huet's* Death, a Relation of his to whom he had intruſted his Manuſcript, did me the Favour to ſend it to me, that the World might be no longer depriv'd of it ; but as ſome Men might queſtion whether the Author of *Demonſtratio Evangelica*, could be likewise the Author of a Work written ſo much in Defence of *Pyrrhonism* ; it is very proper to acquaint the Reader, that this laſt is faithfully printed from the original Manuſcript of Mr. *Huet*, which I carefully preſerve by me, and ſhall be very willing to ſhew to thoſe who ſhall have the Curioſity to examine it ; and I have found it ſo much eaſier to prove the Genuinenefſ of the Ma-
nuſcript,

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manuſcript, becauſe it is written with the Author's own Hand, and that I have ſeveral Letters which that Reverend Prelate did honour me with. I have alter'd nothing in it, except putting the Name of Mr. *Huet* in the room of that fictitious one of *Theocrites* of *Pluvignac*, and Lord of *La Roche* and *Perigord*, under which he had conceal'd himſelf: Thoſe who are fond of knowing the true Authors of Books, will not be diſpleas'd with this Alteration.

THIS Treatiſe was not unknown to the Editor of *Huetiana*, which lately came out; for he tells us, that *the Philoſophical Treatiſe concerning the Weakneſs of Human Underſtanding*, was written by Mr. *Huet*, about the ſame Time with his *Quæſtiones Alnetanae*, publiſh'd at *Caen*, in the Year 1690. Thoſe who are deſirous of it, will likewise find
here

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here annex'd an historical *Encomium* on the Author, written by *Abbot Olivet*, famous for his excellent Translation of *Cicero's* Colloquies *De Naturâ Deorum*.

I shall conclude with a Remark, which I believe the Reader will be pleas'd with, which is, that the Provençal Philosopher whose Name *Mr. Huet* has borrow'd, is that very *Mr. Cormisi* mention'd in the Memoirs of his Life. This learned and excellent Person was President of the Parliament of *Aix* in *Provence*, and by Orders of the Court was sent in Exile to *Caen*, where he became acquainted with *Mr. Huet*, and gave him a Taste for *Sextus Empiricus*, and for the *Sceptick* Philosophy: The Place where that learn'd Prelate speaks of *Mr. Cormisi*, is in his Memoirs, p. 229. and is as follows.

*C A D O M U M delatus est
per eos dies vir literatus, et
A 3 priscae*

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*priscae potissimum philosophiæ
bene peritus, sed & morum præ-
terea comitate amabilis, omni-
que elegantia excultus, Senatûs
Aguensis præses Cormisus, illuc
reflantis fortunæ invidia, &
Regis jussu relegatus; attulit ille
ad me literas commendatitias ab
illustri feminâ Catharinâ vivon-
nâ Rambullietâ, jam superius
commemoratâ, quibus viri prædi-
cabat laudes, meque enixè rogabat,
si quo modo hominis sublevare
possem infortunium, aut conso-
lando patriæque desiderium dictis
leniendo, aut afflictum rebus ipsis
juvando; & assiduâ consuetudine
recreando, his Officiis ne de essem.
Ad id autem etsi me satis im-
pellebat ipsa humanitas, multò
tamen magis movebar ipsius eru-
ditione & virtute, vel ex primo
Congressu cognitâ. Frequens itaque
illi aderam; nec ullus effluebat
dies quin aut ille ventitaret ad
me, aut ego illum convenirem,
simulque*

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*simulque vel amœnissimas Olenæ
ripas, vel per viridissima prata
deambularem. Omnis autem
ferè Sermo erat de veterum Phi-
losophorum Sectis, quarum omni-
um cum egregiè sciens erat, tum
earum præcipuè quæ animum ju-
bent ab omni assensu sustinere.
Summopere itaque comprobabat
Sexti Empirici Doctrinam, effecit-
que Commendatione suâ, ut Auctor
adhuc de nomine tantum cognitus
pervolutaretur à me diligenter,
mihique fieret per familiaris;
et summa esset illius apud me
Commendatio.*

**Historical Encomium on the
Author, written by Abbot**

Olivet. *Joseph Thouliez d', the Abbe*

PETER Daniel HUET,
late Bishop of Avranches,
who died at Paris Jan. 26. 1721.
was born at Caen, Feb. 8. 1630.

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The Love of Learning did out-run in him, I will not say the Use of Reason, since we know not how soon it begins, but at least the use of Speech. *I was scarce wean'd from the Breast*, says he of himself, *when I began to envy those that could read*: He was but Eighteen Months old, when his Father died, and Four Years after he lost his Mother, so that he was left to the Care of some negligent Guardians, who sent him to Board at some House in the Town; where notwithstanding the small Helps he had, and the ill Examples he met with, he finish'd his Studies of Humanity before he was full Thirteen Years of age.

WHEN he came to study Philosophy, he fell into the Hands of an excellent Professor, ² who after

¹ *Huetiana* p. 3. Comment. p. 16.

² Father Membrum famous for his Latin Verses, and a Treatise upon Epick Poety.

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Plato's Method, made him begin by learning some Geometry; but the Disciple went farther than his Master would have him, and took such liking to Geometry, that he made it his chief Study, and seem'd even to despise all other Things which his Master dictated to him; who, happily for our young Gentleman, was both too wise and discrete to resent it at his Hands. He afterwards ran through all the other Parts of the Mathematicks, tho' that Science was not as yet in that Credit, either in the Colleges, or indeed in the World, that it has been since: He was made to maintain some publick Theses, which were the first that ever had been held at *Caen*.

He was next after that, to have studied the Law, and to have taken his Degrees, when the Works of two great Persons, which then first appear'd in the World,

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World, 'diverted him from that useful Study, to a more amusing one; these were *Des Cartes* Principles, and *Bochart's* sacred Geography. What sufficiently shews how great Care we ought to take to free our selves from Prejudices, or at least from obstinately adhering to any (since we see, that the same, tho' a very judicious Person, may at different Periods of his Life think so differently) is, that our Author, who many Years after did so sharply censure *Des Cartes*, was at the first very much taken with him, became a great Admirer and Follower of him for many Years: As for *Bochart's* Geography, it made a double Impression upon him, on account of the immense Learning of the Work, and his Acquaintance with the Author; who was a Protestant Minister at

' The Principles of *Des Cartes*, printed in 1643. and *Bochart's Phalag* printed in 1646.

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Caen. The Book being full of *Greek* and *Hebrew*, he conceiv'd immediately a Desire of learning both these Tongues; went to pay his Respects to the Author, beg'd his Friendship and Advice, and became his Disciple, and that to such a Degree, as to be very near becoming his Competitor. It often happens, that a young Gentleman, who has both Wit and Courage, wants only a living Model to determine him what kind of Study to pursue, and many a one who has spent his whole Life in composing of Madrigals, might have prov'd a very learned Man, had he had a *Bochart* before his Eyes.

WE must not think however, that Mr. *Huet* was averse to those Amusements and Exercises, which are proper for Youth. He saw the World, endeavour'd to please, and to acquire some Reputation: True it is, that he was no extraordinary

ordinary fine Dancer, but then, as he says himself, at ' Raceing, Horse-manship, Fencing, Leaping, Swimming, &c. he out-did all his Companions.

TWENTY Years and a Day having, according to the Custom of *Normandy*, freed him from his sordid Guardians, who basely debar'd him from every Thing they could; his most prevalent Inclination, and the first he gave way to, when he saw himself his own Master, was that of going to *Paris*, not so much out of Curiosity, as to furnish himself with Books, and to get acquainted with the most eminent Men for Learning, or *Princes of Literature*, as he expresses himself. ² He went immediately to pay his Respects to Father *Sirmond*, who was then above Ninety Years old: This venerable old Gentleman, be-

¹ Commentar. Lib. I. p. 55, 56, 57.
Commentar. p. 58.

² *Huetiana*, p. 4.

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ides his great Learning, was endowed with an extraordinary Canon, which was natural to him; and had acquir'd a wonderful Politeness, both at the Court of *Rome*, and that of *France*. The great *Petavius*, who, tho' very much younger than he, was nevertheless much more rigid than his Brother, took such a liking to our young Provençal, that he thought him already worthy to be one of his Disciples; and suffer'd him, tho' then but a Stripling, not only to dissent from him, but even to dispute with, and sometimes to hold an Argument with him.

WERE I to name all the learned Men with whom Mr. *Huet* became acquainted, and was in great Esteem with, from his first coming to *Paris*; I must name all the learned of that Time. Two

* See his Dissertation upon several Subjects, &c. Tom. II. p. 432, 433.

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Years after he had an Opportunity of becoming acquainted with those of *Holland*; for the Queen of *Sweden*, having invited the learned *Bochart* to come to her thither; our Author went along with him: They set out in the Month of *April* 1652. and *Bochart* arriv'd at such a Juncture, that he was not so well receiv'd, as he had reason to expect; that Princess's Health began to be impair'd; too continual an Application to study, in which she did spend whole Nights, had so overheated her Blood, that Dr. *Bourdelot*, her Physician, an expert Man, and a great Courtier, one who had studied her Temper, as well as her Constitution, oblig'd her to break off all Commerce with the Learned, in Hopes of having the sole Management of her himself. *Bochart* suffer'd by it; but as for Mr. *Huet*, his youthful Years made him appear less dangerous

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dangerous to that Phyſician. He ſaw the Queen very often, who try'd to engage him to her, but the Inconſtancy of *Chriſtina's* Temper frighted him, ſo that he choſe rather to return to *France* at the end of Three Months. All that he got by this Journey, was a Manuscript of *Origen*, which he had copied at *Stockholm*.

AMONG thoſe learned Men, with whom he became acquainted in *Holland*, *Saumaſius* deſerves the firſt Rank. Would any one that knows with what Fire and Paſſion *Saumaſius* was us'd to write, think that he was at the Bottom a very affable and communicative Man, a Man of the ſweeteſt Temper imaginable, and one who ſuffer'd himſelf to be domineer'd by a haughty ill natur'd Wife, who boasted that ſhe was the Miſtreſs of a Husband, who was *the moſt learned of all the Nobles, and the*
moſt

xvi *The Publisher to the Reader.*

most noble of all the Learned.

As soon as Mr. Huet was come back into his own Country, he ply'd his Studies more briskly than ever, that he might be the better able to publish his Manuscript of *Origen*: Two Academies, one of which had been form'd during his Absence, for Literature, and another of Natural Philosophy, which he founded himself, serv'd him for a Relaxation, or rather for change of Study. Whilst he was about translating *Origen*, he acquainted himself with the Rules of Translation with the different Methods of the best and most famous Translators; this gave Birth to the first Book he ever publish'd, and by which he made, as it were, his Entry into the Republick of Letters. This Book, as well as all the rest he publish'd since, was justly admir'd for its immense Learning, judicious Criticisms, and above all, for such excellent Latin, as would
hav

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have even credited the *Augustian* Age; at length, Sixteen Years after his return from *Sweden*, he publish'd his Translation of *O-rigen*; which Sixteen Years being spent in his own Country, and without any publick Employ, he gave himself up wholly to his Books, without any other Avocation, than that of shewing himself once a Year at *Paris* for a Month or Two.

DURING this Interval, Fortune was pleas'd to shew him a smiling Countenance once or twice, but he was not much dazzled at it. The Queen of *Sweden*, who, after her Abdication, was gone to *Rome*, with Design to end her Days there, invited him to come to her in the Year 1659. but the Disappointment of Mr. *Bochart*, who had been so earnestly invited by her, and was forgotten as soon as he appear'd there, hinder'd him from falling
b under

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under the Temptation of seeing *Italy*. He was afterwards invited into *Sweden*, in order to be entrusted with the Education of the young King, who in the Year 1660. restor'd *Charles Gustavus*, *Christina's* Successor; but he had Resolution enough to refuse the Offer, and those who judge of Actions by the Event, will find that he was very much in the right to stay in *France*; for he was chosen Ten Years after Sub-preceptor to his Royal Highness the *Dauphin*, without any other Recommendation than that of his great Merit, and the Choice of the judicious *Monf. De Montesquieu*.

He came to Court in the Year 1670, and continued there till the Year 1680, when the *Dauphin* was Married; the more he became sensible of the many Avocations, to which his new Residence expos'd him, the more
covetous

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covetous he became of his Time. Scarce would he allow himself some few Hours Sleep; all the rest of his Time was taken up, either with the necessary Functions of his Place, or with his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, which was begun and finished amidst the Fatigues and Hurry of the Court.

NEITHER ought we to forget what Services he did to the Commonwealth of Learning, by procuring it that Series of Commentaries, commonly known by the Name of *Delphinica*; for though Mr. *Montausier* was the first Projector of them, yet we are beholden to Mr. *Huet* for his forming the Plan, and directing the Execution of them, as far as the Docility and Capacity of the Performers would permit it.

AFTER he had spent so much of his Time in Compositions and Lectures, which had no other Object but Religion, he was at

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last Ordain'd at the Age of Forty Six, and was afterwards presented to the Abby of *Aunay*, whither he retir'd every Summer, after he had left the Court. One of the Works which he there compos'd under the Title of *Questiones Alnetanae*, will immortalize the Name of that solitary Place, which is pleasantly situated in a Thicket, which makes the most delightful part of all *Low Normandy*.

IN the Year 1685. he was promoted to the Bishoprick of *Soissons*: Before his Bull could be dispatch'd, the Abbot of *Silery* having been chosen to the Bishoprick of *Avranches*, they obtain'd the King's Leave to exchange; but by Reason of some Mis-understanding between the Court of *Rome*, and that of *France*, they could not be consecrated till the Year 1692. I suppose Mr. *Huet* was not over-much troubled at this tedious Delay; for the Life he led,

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led, and prefer'd above all others, did not very much agree with the Episcopal Functions; neither was it long before he was 'tir'd with it, so that he laid down his Bishoprick of *Avranches*, in the Year 1699.

To make him amends for it, the King gave him the Abby of *Fonteney*, which is just by the Gates of *Caen*. The Love which Mr. *Huet* bore to his Country, made him resolve to fix there; to which Purpose he order'd the Abbot's House and Gardens to be fitted up for him. His Country had appear'd to him pleasant and delightful, whilst he had none but Friends in it; but as soon as he came to be Possessor of Lands there, he was plagued with many Law-Suits, that tho', Thanks to his native Air, he was not without some smattering of the Law, yet he was forc'd to leave the Place. He return'd to *Paris*, and

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went and liv'd in the Monastery of the profess'd Jesuits, where he spent the last Twenty Years of his Life ; during which, he apply'd himself chiefly in writing Annotations on the Vulgate Bible. He not only look'd upon the Bible as the Fountain of all Religion, but he thought it likewise to be the fittest Book to form and exercise a truly learned Man : ' He had read it over in the original *Hebrew* Four and Twenty Times, comparing it still with other Oriental Texts. Every Day, says he, without excepting one, he us'd to spend Two or Three Hours in it from the Year 1681. to 1712.

A cruel Fit of Sickness which seiz'd him this Year, and oblig'd him to keep his Bed near Six Months, did very much weaken, I will not say his Mind, but his Body and Memory ; notwithstanding which he had no sooner recover'd a

² Comment. p. 354. *Huetian.* p. 182.

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little Strength, but he set himself to write his own Life, which he did, with as much Eloquence, tho' not with an Exactness and Preciseness equal to his other Works; his Memory being very much impair'd from what it had formerly been, it weakning every Day more and more; and he finding himself unable to go through such a Work, he contented himself with writing down some loose Thoughts; a Task which was more suitable to his present Condition.

ALTHO' he intrusted me with the sole Copy of it, that I might publish it under the Title of *Huetiana*: I cannot here flatter my self with the Hopes, that a recital of his complacent and obliging Carriage towards me, ever since I had the Honour to be acquainted with him, which was in the Year 1708, would be allow'd me; the World is apt to

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question

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question when we are speaking of great Men, whether it is Self-interest, or Gratitude that moves us to boast of their Friendship ; and we very often choose to forego a Duty, rather than be suspected of a Weakness.

HOWEVER, I cannot forbear owning, that I was the Person who prevail'd with him to give us a Fifth Edition of his Poems, in the Year 1709 ; and I do the more gladly remember it, because, had it not been for that Edition, which did, as it were, rouse up and awaken his sleeping Muse, in all Likelihood he had never thought of those Five new Metamorphoses, ' which he wrote in the Years 1710, 1711, in which his Wit and Genius seems to be entirely reviv'd : What Politeness and Delicacy ! and for a Man of his great Learning and Years, what Liveliness,

! Lampyrus, Galevita, Mimus, &c.

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or rather, if I may be allow'd the Expression, what Youthfulness of Fancy do they abound with!

Now if we consider that our Author liv'd to the Ninety first Year of his Age; that he had naturally a strong Inclination for Study, even from his Infancy; that the greatest part of his Time was his own; that he was blest with a good Constitution, and enjoy'd almost all that Time, a perfect and constant State of Health; that all the while he was getting up and dressing himself, or when he was going to Bed, and while he was at his Meals, he would constantly make one of his Servants read to him: In a Word, and to use his own Expressions, *That neither the Heat of Youth, nor the Hurry of Business, nor the Diversity of his Employments, nor the Company of his Equals, nor the Bustle and Noise of the World, could*
ever

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ever lessen or allay his natural and invincible Love of Learning¹ we shall be apt to conclude, that the Bishop of *Avanches*, was perhaps of all the Men that ever liv'd, the most studious and the best read.

ADD to this, that besides his having a strong Constitution, he always liv'd very regularly; he left off eating of Suppers, ever since he was Forty Years old; at his Dinner he eat very sparingly, and contented himself with common Dishes, would admit of no Sauces or Ragouts, and scarce did he mix the eighth part of Wine with his Water: Towards Night, he would take a Mefs of Medicinal Broth, commonly known by the Name of Dr. *Delorme's* red Broth; the Truth is, when he was never so well in Health, he had always such pale

¹ *Huetiana*, p. 4. See likewise *Commentarior.* Lib. I. p. 15. & Lib. V. p. 278.

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Looks, as would have made one fear he had been quite otherwise.

A very singular and remarkable Thing that happen'd to him, was, that Two or Three Days before his Death, he perfectly recover'd his Senses and Memory; he employ'd those precious Moments in Acts of Piety, and with great Calmness and Serenity, and with full Confidence in God, he resign'd his Soul to him.

I know of no other Manuscripts but these that follow :

1. a Latin Translation of the *Loves of Daphnis and Chloe*, wrote when he was but Eighteen Years of age.

2. *The Sham Incas*, a Romance, wrote at the age of Twenty Five.

3. *A Philosophical Treatise, concerning the Weakness of Human Understanding*, wrote much about

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about the same Time with his
Quæstiones Alnetanæ.

4. An Answer to Mr. Regis,
concerning *Des Cartes's* Methaphysics.

5. His Annotations on the
Vulgate Bible.

6. A Collection of between
Five and Six Hundred Letters,
wrote to several learned Men,
either in *Latin* or in *French*: As
for his printed Books, I shall
give them to the Reader in the
same Order as they were pub-
lish'd.

1. *De Interpretatione Libri
duo, Paris 1661. in 4to. Re-
printed at Stade, in 1680. 12mo.
and at the Hague, 1683. in 8vo.*

2. *Origenis Commentaria in
Sacram Scripturam, Rouën, 1668.
2 Vol. in Fol. Cologn. 1685. in
Fol.*

3. *Of the Origine of the Romans,
Paris 1670, 1678, 1685, 1693,
1711.*

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1711. in 12mo, Reprinted at London in *English*, in 1672. in 16to, at *Amsterdam* in *Dutch*, 1679, 1716. in 12mo.

4. A Speech spoken at the Royal Academy, *Paris*, 1674. in 4to. *Amsterdam* 1709. in 12mo.

5. *Animadversiones in Manilium, & Scaligeri Notas*, at the End of the *Manilius in usum Delphini*, *Paris*, 1669. in 4to.

6. *Demonstratio Evangelica*, *Paris*, 1679, 1694. in Fol. *Amsterdam*, 1680. in 8vo. *Leipsick* 1694. in 4to.

7. *Censura philosophiæ Cartesianæ*, *Paris*, 1689, 1694. in 12mo. *Helmstadt*, 1690. in 4to. *Franker*, 1690. *Hanover*, 1690. in 12mo.

8. *Quæstiones Alnetanæ*, *Caen*, 1690. in 4to.

9. Of the Situation of Paradise, *Paris*, 1691. in 12mo. *Leipsick*, 1694. in 12mo. and 4to. *Amsterdam*, 1701. in 12mo. *ibid.* in Latin, 1698. in 12mo.

10. Some

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10. Some new Memoirs to illustrate the History of *Cartesianism*, Paris, 1692, 1711. in 12mo. *Utrecht*, 1698. in 16to. *Amsterdam*, 1698. in 12mo.

11. Synodical Statutes for the Diocess of *Avranches*, Caen, 1693, 1695, 1696, 1698. in 8vo.

12. *Carmina*, Utrecht, 1664, 1700. in 8vo. *Deventer*, 1668. in 8vo. *Amsterdam*, 1672. in 16to. *Paris*, 1739. in 12mo.

13. *De Navigationibus Salomonis*, Amsterdam, 1698. in 8vo. and in Fol.

14. *Notae in Anthologiam Epigrammatum Graecorum*, at the end of his Poems printed by *Graevius*, Utrecht, 1700. in 12mo.

15. *Origines de Caen, Rouën*, 1702, 1706. in 8vo.

16. Dissertations on several Theological and Philosophical Subjects, *Paris*, 1712. in 12mo.

17. History

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17. History of the Trade and Navigation of the Ancients, Paris, 1716. in 12mo. Brussels, 1717. in 12mo.

18. *Commentarius de rebus ad eum pertinentibus*, Amsterdam, 1718. in 12mo.

19. *Huetiana*, Paris and Amsterdam, 1717. in 12mo.



THE

THE HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION

IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

BY JOHN CALVIN

TRANSLATED BY

GEORGE COCKING

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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made

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demicks

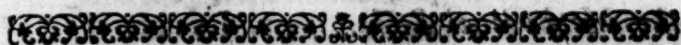
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THE
Author's Preface

To his FRIENDS the
PHILOSOPHERS.

CONTAINING

- I. *The Exordium and Argument.*
- II. *The Division of the Work.*



HARKEN, my dear Friends, Exordium
and Argu-
ment.
not to my own Opinion
concerning the Nature of
Human Understanding and
Reason, but that of an ex-
cellent great Man; one who
was thoroughly vers'd in all

the Ancient and Modern Seats of Philoso-
phy. He was a Native of *Provence*, and a

B

Man

HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

Man of Quality, who for the Sake of his Studies had travell'd much in his younger Years, and was become very intimate with all those who were famous for their Knowledge in Ipeculative Sciences: Being afterwards possess'd with an important Employment, he created himself some powerful Enemies, who did him many ill Offices, and oblig'd him at last to leave his Country, and to retire to *Padua*, a City very delightful and proper for his Studies, which he had still pursu'd; and whither I had long ago chosen to retire to follow my own. He came to see me after his wonted Manner, not as believ'ing me a Philosopher, but as a Lover of Philosophy; such as he had discover'd me to be, by some Writings which were slipp'd out of my Hands. I was at first struck with Admiration at the Brightness of his Wit, and the Vastness of his Learning, but much more at his great Candor and Integrity. Highly pleas'd with the respectful and obliging manner with which I receiv'd his Visits, the grateful Sense I had of them, and the Conformity of our Inclinations, he was not long before he open'd his Heart to me. For after I had observ'd him to oppose with some Warmth, and after the manner of the *Academicks*, all the Sects of Philosophers, without adhering to any himself, or my being able with all the Cunning I could use, and all the various Questions with which I us'd to

reason

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tease and sift him, to make him declare himself; I was forc'd at last to have recourse to Prayers and Solicitations, desiring him, in the most serious Manner, to open himself to me. Being at length overcome by my earnest Entreaties, both in this Conference and some others we had since, he freely and sincerely declar'd his Thoughts to me concerning Philosophy. His Discourses seem'd to me so bright, and so far above the common receiv'd Opinions, that I resolv'd not to lose them, and therefore took care as soon as we were parted, to write them down, for fear I should forget them: But this I did only for my own Use, not having the least Thought that they should ever come out of my Hands, and thus it was that he explain'd himself to me.

WHEN first I apply'd my self to the Study of Philosophy in my younger Years, I was very much offended at the continual Disputes of Philosophers about every Trifle, and expecting from them all the boasted Advantages of Philosophy, *viz.* The Knowledge, Truth, and Peace of Mind: I was not a little surpriz'd to find my self plung'd in the thickest Darkness of invincible Ignorance and endless Controversies. And as I had learn'd *Aristotle's* Philosophy, according to the prevailing Custom of the Age, I was still more amaz'd that the Sect alone of that Philosopher should have been able to produce so great a Diversity of Opinions,

among the *Greeks, Arabians, Latins*, Ancients and Moderns. I was more than ordinarily surpriz'd at the Blindness of our Understanding, when I reflected on what *Aristotle* had ventur'd to affirm, *viz.* That the Philosophers, who had gone before him, were either Dunces, or else very conceited, for presuming to think that they had rais'd Philosophy to its greatest Perfection, but that he believ'd he could safely assure them, that this great Work would be perfected in a little while; when at the same Time, all Things were so far from it, that one might see every Day some new Disputes arise, and that Time, which moderates all Things, did on the contrary sowre the Minds of Philosophers, insomuch that their Science seem'd rather a crafty Method of Wrangling, and raising subtle Disputes, than a Search after Truth, as they did boast it. I began to wish that some Person of Authority and Learning would undertake what the Proconsul *Gellius* is reported to have done, who being come to *Athens*, and having assembled all the Philosophers, who were then very numerous there, did by an elaborate Speech exhort them to put an End to their long Disputes; offering them at the same Time both his Mediation and Good Offices. Many have look'd upon it as a ridiculous Proposal, but for my Part, I never did; for such an Agreement may be easily brought to pass, if every one of them would but divest

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divest himself of his Prejudices, and enter into a new and serious Examination of all those Tenents they seem so wedded to; if they would only propose those Things as uncertain, which they before maintain'd as indubitable, and would learn once for all to check their Belief, and suspend their Judgment. Neither could I disapprove *Nero's* Design of studying Philosophy, in order to find out the Cause of so great a Diversity of Opinions, had he had a sincere Desire to put an End to these Controversies, instead of maintaining them for his Diversion according to the Lightness and Untowardness of his Temper.

DESCARTES's Philosophy has been in great Repute in our Days. The Novelty of it drew many Disciples to it, insomuch that it was expected by a great many, that *Aristotle* would be soon forsaken, and *Descartes* succeed him. Being tir'd with the Sect of the *Peripateticks*, I was the more desirous to know what might be expected from this new Philosophy. I was wonderfully taken with it, for it seem'd to me to be founded upon so small a Number of Principles, and those so pure and simple, that it penetrated into the first Causes, by the clearest and easiest Means. However, it was not long before I found that the *Peripateticks* still kept their Ground; that there were dangerous Factions form'd against *Descartes*; that *Gassendi* was become the Head of a

B 3

Party,

Party, and had successfully reviv'd the Sect of *Epicurus*, tho' so much cry'd down and suspected of Impiety, tho' it met with more Adversaries than Admirers. I therefore resolv'd to stick to *Platonism*, thinking I could not make choice of a better Master, than that great Philosopher, whom Antiquity has honour'd with the Name of Divine, whom so many learned Persons have had in Admiration, and whom the most ancient Fathers of the Church have follow'd, making use of his Method and Doctrines to explain and defend the Christian Religion. But when I came to search this Philosophy to the Bottom, I, who sought nothing but the solid Foundation of Truth, found nothing in it that could fix my Mind, no certain and determinate Principles, no System or Connexion of Doctrine, nothing coherent, nothing well prov'd. Every Thing in it is treated with Delicacy and Eloquence, but they maintain the *Pro* and *Con*, the Affirmative and the Negative, by Arguments of equal Weight and Force, without determining the Mind to either Side of the Question. Besides, that this straggling and floating Sect has produc'd several others, every one of which pretends theirs to be the real and genuine Doctrine of *Plato*, and that all the rest are corrupted. So that after I had read *Plato's* Works, and those of the greatest part of his Disciples, I found my self further than ever from the Knowledge of Truth.

This

This however did not discourage me, but I resolv'd to go through all the old Philosophy: I collected all the Doctrines of it on every side: I diligently read all that *Diogenes Laertius*, and others had written of the Lives and Opinions of the Philosophers that were before them, hoping that among so great a Number of Sects, how contemptible soever they appear'd, I might light upon one that was less subject to Contradiction, and more proper to fix and settle the Uncertainty and Agitation of our Minds:

I was not deceiv'd in my Hopes. The Doctrine of *Acrasius*, *Carnades*, and *Pyrro*, pleas'd me very much, and I thought that they understood the Nature of Human Understanding much better than any other Philosophers, though I could not in every Respect approve their Notions; but having rejected several of them, I became the Author of my own System; since which, a long Habit of Study, Reflexion and Meditation, having made me better acquainted with myself, I became fully persuaded that there is neither in me, or in any Man else, any natural Faculty by which we may discover Truth with a full and certain Assurance; and that the Cause of all our Errors is the too hasty Propensity of our Minds, which makes us too easily believe what ever Notions are propos'd to us.

THUS spoke this learned Man, and as he observ'd my Astonishment at his reviving

a Doctrine which I believ'd entirely extinct and exploded; you wonder, says he, at my Boldness in venturing to advance a Doctrine which seems to shock common Sense, or rather at my Timorousness and Mistrust, in not daring to credit the Testimony of my Reason and Senses; but, if you'll lend your Attention a little longer, I dare promise my self thus much from your Sagacity and Candor, that you'll rather admire the Presumption and Blindness of Human Understanding, which, thinking it sees what it doth not, doth rashly and precipitately fall into Error. I will listen to you, said I, with all the Attention you can desire; and I heartily wish you may perform what you promise. To which he answer'd as follows.

Its Division.

I N order to set some certain Limits to this Dispute, it will be necessary to divide it into three Parts. We must in the first Place, prove that Human Understanding cannot discover the Truth by the Help of Reason, with a full and perfect Certainty. We must in the next Place, make an exact Search after the surest Means and justest Method of arguing. And lastly, we shall answer the Objections of those whose Notions are contrary to ours.



BOOK I.

A Philosophical Treatise, concerning the Weakness of Human Understanding: Shewing, that Truth cannot by the Help of Reason be perfectly and with Certainty known by Human Understanding.

CHAP. I.

Wherein is shew'd, 1. What Philosophy is. 2. What Human Understanding is. 3. What an Iden is. 4. What Thought is. 5. What Reason is. 6. What Truth is. 7. That there are several Degrees of Certitude, and that the Certainty of Faith doth perfect the Certainty of Human Nature.



HOEVER undertakes to prove the Weakness of Man's Understanding and Reason, doth at his first Entrance into Philosophy meet with an open Field, and a Career that has been beaten long ago by the greater part of ancient

ancient Philosophers, where our first Conflict must be about the Nature and Search of Truth ; for it would be contrary to the Order and Method we propos'd, to labour after the Knowledge of Truth, before we know what Truth is, and whether it be attainable or no.

What Philosophy is.

1st. For Philosophy being nothing else but the Study of Wisdom, the Search after Truth, and an Attempt of Human Understanding to know Truth by the Help of Reason, it is very necessary that a Philosopher should know what Truth is, what Human Understanding, and what Reason is ; and that he be well assur'd, that Human Understanding is capable of knowing the Truth by the Help of Reason, before he undertakes a Search, which will cost him a great deal of Pains, without any Success. Just as a Sportsman, who is ready to go a Hunting, if he chances to hear that there are some inaccessible Rocks, or some impenetrable Precipices, which will hinder his Chace, will never give himself the Trouble to go after his Game. Let us therefore endeavour to discover what the Nature of Truth, of Reason and Human Understanding is ; as far as such a Discovery is allowable and possible to Man : For I should be very senseless, if being persuaded, that Man cannot by the Help of Reason come at the certain and perfect Knowledge of any Thing, I should now pretend to know clearly and certainly what Truth and Reason is,

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2d. This therefore is my Definition of ^{What Hu-} Human Understanding; an innate Principle ^{man Un-} or Power in Man, which is moved and stirr'd ^{derstanding} is. up to form Ideas and Thoughts, by the Reception and Impression of Forms or Images in the Brain; these Forms, I am speaking of, are not the Images or Shadows which proceed from Bodies, which are likewise call'd Forms; but I understand by them, the Tracks imprinted on the Brain, by the Motion of the animal Spirits and Nerves, when they are mov'd by the Organs of Sensation, excited by any external Object, the Impression of which Tracks causes the Soul, which is intimately united to the Brain, to be dispos'd after this or that Manner.

3d. I call an Idea the Image which the ^{What Idea} Soul, dispos'd after a certain Manner, by the ^{is.} Impression of the Images in the Brain, forms to it self.

4th. By Thought, I mean the Act of the ^{What} Understanding, mov'd and determin'd by ^{Thought is.} the Reception of the Images in the Brain, to form Ideas, to compare them together, and frame a Judgment concerning them.

5th. REASON I call that Faculty which ^{What Rea-} the Understanding has to search after Truth, ^{son is.} by its own natural Operations.

6th. As to Truth (not that which Phi- ^{What} losophers call Truth of Existence, but that ^{Truth is,} which they call Truth of Judgment) I define it thus; the Agreement and Relation of the Judgment, which the Understand-
ing

ing makes between the Idea which is within us, and the external Object which is the Origine of that Idea. To explain this Definition, let us suppose the Object, which offers it self to us from without, to be a Lion, from which the Idea which is in me, is form'd, my Understanding from that Idea conceives and judges it to be a Lion. The Judgment which my Understanding makes, agrees with and answers to the outward Object, and therefore we affirm it true: Now the Conformity and Agreement of the Judgment, which my Understanding has form'd, to the external Object, is called Truth; as on the contrary, if my Understanding from that Idea conceives and judges it to be a Dog, this Judgment form'd by my Understanding is different from and unlike the external Object, and is therefore call'd false; and this Difference and Disagreement from the outward Object is call'd Falshood or Error. I call it an external Object, whether it be present when the Understanding is mov'd and determin'd to think on it, or whether it has been present heretofore, and has imprinted its Image within us; whether it be the Representation of that Object which we have seen before, or the Description that has been made to us of it. Hence it comes that in our Sleep, or in a Delirium caus'd by a Fever, or in Madness, so many different Images present themselves to the Understanding, the outward Objects of which are not present,

present, but only their Ideas are left behind. Some give quite another Definition of these Things we have been defining, and tack other Notions to these Terms; but I shall only make use of those I have been giving you. Now if it be really true, that Human Nature is such, that it cannot perfectly and certainly know by the Help of Reason, that this external Object agrees with, and answers to the Judgment which my Understanding has form'd of it, from the Idea I had of it; then it necessarily follows, that Man cannot know Truth with a perfect Certainty by the Help of Reason.

Now there are two Ways of knowing the Truth, for either we know it with some Doubt and Uncertainty, as when we see, or fancy we see, according to the Poets Expression, the Moon through some Clouds; or we know it with Certainty, and this Certainty has likewise two different Degrees.

For the Certainty with which the Blessed above know Things in Heaven, which we may call the highest Degree of Certitude, is different from that Certainty with which Men know Things on Earth during their Lives. Moreover, this last Certainty has likewise two Degrees; for by Faith we certainly know the Things, which God hath reveal'd to us, with a Certainty, which we may call Divine, seeing God himself is the Author of it; and we know other Things with a Human Certainty, and this last has

still

There are several Sorts and Degrees of Certainty.

The Certitude of Faith surpasses the Certainty of human Nature.

still several Degrees, for we know some Things more certainly than we do others. Thus we more certainly know, that the Whole is greater than its Part, than we know that the Planet *Saturn* is above *Jupiter*, or than we know what is attested by two Witneses; for this last Knowledge has nothing but a Certainty of Probability, the second has a true Certainty, and the first is the most certain: There are therefore three Degrees of human Certitude, viz. the highest, the middlemost, and the lowest, each of which will likewise admit either of some Augmentation or Diminution.

THERE are still two Kinds of human Certainty, the first of which we may call Physical, and the other Moral. I certainly know, that Two and Two make Four, and that two Bodies, which are equal to a Third, are equal one to the other. In like manner I certainly know, that there is a City near the *Bosphorus*, call'd *Constantinople*, and that there was a *Roman* Emperor, called *Augustus*, that Fire warms, and Ice cools. The first of these I call physical Certainty, which I have by the Light of Nature, which is a Faculty which Nature has implanted in my Understanding: And I have the Knowledge of the latter from sufficient Testimony, from the Authority of Custom, and the Report of Experience to which Things Men are wont according to their Manners and common Customs to give Credit with Certainty.

All

Of the WEAKNESS of

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All this plainly shews how many Sorts of Certainty God has given to the Understanding of Man during this Life; this Divine Certitude, with which we know by Faith the Things which are reveal'd, is not however equal to that heavenly Certitude of the Blessed above, either for its Firmness or Evidence, according to the Saying of St. Paul to the *Corinthians*,^a *but now we see through a glass darkly, but as to the blessed, he says,* that they see *face to face*; that himself knew in part, but then he shall know as he is known. Moreover, this Certainty of Faith, which comes from God, and which we now enjoy, is very much superior to human Certitude, even to that of the highest Degree, whether we have acquir'd it by the Help of our Reason or our Senses. Wherefore St. *Chrysostome*^b with a great deal of Truth affirms, 'That if we are not more surely persuaded of the Things which we know by Faith, than we are of those which we know by Sense, our Faith is defective'. Since therefore it is true that the highest degree of human Certitude, such, for Instance, as that by which I certainly believe some first Principles and Axioms in Geometry, is so inferior to the Certainty of Faith, and that the Certainty of Faith comes so far short of the Certainty of the Blessed above; it is very plain that the highest Degree of human Certitude is imperfect; for that which is perfect, is in all Respects complete, and

^a 1 Cor.

XIII. 9.

^{12.}

^b St. Chry.

Hom. 21.

in Epist. ad

Hzbr.

and wants nothing, that is necessary in order to its utmost Perfection. Now human Certitude wants that Part of Certainty which is found in the Certitude of Faith, but is not in human Certitude, and this last doth moreover want that other Part of Certitude which is found in the Certainty of the Blessed above, which is not in the Certitude of Faith.

WHEN therefore I affirm, that Man cannot know the Truth with Certainty, I would be thus understood; that Man in this Life cannot come at the Knowledge of the Truth with that supreme Certitude, to which nothing is wanting in order to its utmost Perfection; but that he may know it with a human Certainty, such as it has pleased God our Understanding should be capable of, whilst he is ty'd to this mortal Body. Our Understanding having nothing more sure or more solid to build upon than this Certainty, we may call it the highest human Certainty, although it be not absolutely perfect, and that Man, assisted only by the Light of Nature, be not able to attain to a perfect Certitude and infallible Evidence; and that he may know it much more certainly by the Help of Faith, I mean in the Sense of the Apostle, *through a glass darkly*: For the Grace of God, through Faith, doth supply what is wanting in human Nature, in order to our having such a perfect Knowledge of Things, it fortifies the Weakness of
our

Our Reason and Senses dispels the Darkneſs of Doubt, and upholds our fickle and staggering Minds; but we ſhall preſently come to a fuller Explication of all theſe Matters.



C H A P. II.

Proving both from Holy Scriptures and Fathers, that Man cannot attain to a certain and perfect Knowledge of Truth, by the Help of Reason.



U T before we come to prove the Things themſelves, we ſhall firſt demonſtrate it from Divine Authority, which in Holy Writ very often reminds us of our Ignorance, and tells us, that we give our ſelves fruitleſs Pains when we endeavour to come to the Knowledge of Things, and their Cauſes; and that Man is naturally ſo fram'd, that he cannot attain to any certain Knowledge, by all his Labour and Study. This is what God aſſures us of by the Mouth of Salomon, the wiſeſt of Men. *Eccleſ. viii. 16, 17. When I apply'd my heart to know wiſdom, and to know the events which happen upon the earth. Some there are who labour night and day, and deprive themſelves of ſleep. Then I beheld all the works of God,*

C

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Of the Weakness of

and that it is impossible for man to find out what is done under the sun, and that the more a man labours to find it out, the less shall he be able to compass it, and that tho' a wise-man shall pretend to have discover'd it, yet shall he not be able to find it. The Cause of this Weakness he attributes to the Body, in the Mass of which whilst he continues inclos'd, he can never raise himself to the Knowledge of Things; for he says, That our corruptible body doth weigh down the soul; and this earthly tabernacle doth depress the understanding, which is full of many thoughts. We scarce conjecture the things that are on earth, and find with pain the things that are in sight. Who shall be able to know what is done in heaven? Who shall be able to understand thy councils, if thou dost not grant us thy wisdom, and send thy holy Spirit from on high? Sap. ix. 15. & seq. He declares in another Place, that this vast and insatiable Desire of Wisdom, which is born with us, has been given by God to Man as a kind of Itch or Leprosy, to give him a fruitless Uneasiness. I have beheld, says he, (Eccles. iii. 10, 11.) the trouble which God has given to the sons of men, to exercise them therewith, whatever he doth is good, and is done in season, he has given us this world to meditate upon, and dispute about, but with this condition; that the works which God did from the beginning to the
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end shall not be investigated by us. To the same Purpose are those Sentences in *Ecclesiasticus*, which seem to have been taken from the Writings of Salomon. *Seek not the things that are too high for thee, neither search into those which are above thy strength, but let thy thoughts be still about those which he has commanded thee. In the multitude of his works be not too curious, for it is not necessary that thou shouldst see with thine eyes, the things which are hidden. Do not give thy self up to a laborious search into needless matters, neither endeavour to pry into the multitude of his works, for he has shewn thee many more things than thy reason is able to comprehend, Eccles. iii. 21. & seq. St. Paul, who was sent by God himself, to teach the Gentiles the only true Philosophy, doth plainly prove to the Greeks, who so earnestly sought after the Knowledge of Truth, that the Works of God are vastly too high, and above the Reach of our Understanding. It is written, says he, 1 Cor. i. 19. & seq. I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nought the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the studious disputer of this world? Has not God confounded the wisdom of this world: for since after the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, that is, by human Wisdom, which is Reason, it pleased God by the foolishness*

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of preaching to save them that believe, that is to say, to provide for the Salvation of those who make use of Faith, and not of Reason; and afterwards, *ibid* 22. &c. *The Gentiles seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified;* and then he adds, *because that which is foolishness with God, is wiser than men;* and a little further he says, that *God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.* And 1 Cor. iii. v. 19. he says, that *the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God,* and at last confirms this Doctrine which is taken out of *Isa.* xxix. 14. and xxxiii. 18. with the Words of *David, Psal.* xciv. 11. *God knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are but vanity.* He likewise dissuades the *Colossians* from the Study of that vain and deceitful Philosophy which is built upon human Reason, and not upon the Faith of the Lord Jesus. *Take care,* says he, *that no man deceive you by means of philosophy and vain deceit after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of this world, and not after Jesus Christ.* It was therefore from such Considerations as these, that *Constantine* the Great, in his Speech to the Assembly of Saints, ventur'd to affirm, (*Orat. ad Cæt. Sanct. cap.* 8.) 'that Man cannot attain to the Knowledge of Truth'; and *Arnobius*, who was before *Constantine*, writes (*Lib.* i. and ii. p. 46, 47.) *that man is a blind animal, which doth neither know himself, nor*
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what he ought to do, when and how he ought to do it, by any reason whatever. He likewise reckons amongst the Number of those great Benefits, for which human Nature is indebted to *Jesus Christ*, and for which he had deserv'd to be esteem'd a God, had he been but a mere Man, his discovering to us, that *Man is a senseless Animal, which gives Credit to every idle Notion, and can neither comprehend, know or see, any Thing that is before his Eyes* : He tells us in another place, that *when our Understanding is desirous to know the Truth, the Obscurity of the very Things themselves opposes it; and that being as it were blind, we are sure of nothing that we see; but through the oblique Mazes of Doubts and Conjectures, we fall headlong into Error; that Man will dispute about every Thing, but knows nothing* : and that although we know nothing, we nevertheless deceive our selves, by giving our selves up to our own Pride, which easily persuades us that we have attain'd to Knowledge; and that our Weakness and Ignorance is so much the more to be pity'd; that tho' it may sometimes happen that we speak Truth, yet we cannot be sure whether we do or not; and that it was upon this very Account that the blessed *Jesus* did dissuade Man from searching into those Things that were too high for him, and excite him to the Contemplation and Service of God.

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LACTANTIUS, who was *Arnobius's* Disciple, has follow'd his Master's Steps, and taught that Man is ignorant of Truth, that he knows nothing by the Help of Philosophy, and that we ought to direct our Lives according to the receiv'd Customs. His whole Work of Institutions is full of such Doctrines, but more particularly where (as if it were to excite us to the doing of that which we are now about) he expresses himself as follows: (*Lact. Inst. Lib. iii. cap. i.*) *the Holy Scriptures having taught us, that the Thoughts of Philosophers are foolish, we must make good this Doctrine by Deeds as well as Proofs, lest any Man being deceived by the specious Name of Wisdom, or blinded by the Lustre of vain Eloquence, should rather chuse to credit human than divine Things, that is, obey his Reason rather than Faith.*

ST. Gregory of Nazianzum reminds us of our Ignorance, when he tells us (*Orat. 34. quæ est 2. de Theologiâ*) that whilst we continue in this Life, we only see the Reasons and Design of the Creation and created Things through a Cloud; so thick is the Darkness which obscures our Understanding, so great an Obstacle is the Weight of our Bodies; but that we shall see all Things clearly, when we are once loosen'd from them. To the same Purpose speaks St. Austin, (*Contr. Academic Lib. iii. c. 19.*) *This is not* says he, *the Philosophy of this World*

World which our Religion has a just Abhorrence for; but the Philosophy of another, a spiritual World, to which our Reason, subtle as it is, could never have recall'd our Souls, blinded as they are with various Mists of Error, and polluted with the Filth of our Bodies, had not God, of his Mercy, brought down, and submitted to our human Bodies the Authority of the divine Mind, whose Precepts, nay, whose very Acts might have excited our Souls to come to themselves, and to turn their Eyes towards their native Country, even without Contention or Dispute.

AND in another Place, he expresses himself thus: (*de Mor. Eccles. Cath. cap. 2.*) Since Human Understanding is so obscur'd by habitual Darkness, and so overwhelmed in the Night of Sin, that it cannot steadfastly behold the Brightness and Holiness of Reason; it was a very salutary Institution, that we should suffer our staggering Sight, which is cover'd with the Mists of Humanity, to be guided and directed by Authority towards the Light of Truth. And Isidorus Pelusiensis doth plainly declare, according to the Maxim of Socrates, that he is very sure that he knows nothing, (*Lib. iii. epist. 241.*)

THE Council of Nice applauded, with an universal Consent, what was said by a Plebeian, That Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, had not taught us the Subtleties of

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Logick, nor the Crafts of Sophistry, but a pure and clear Doctrine, which has maintain'd it self by Faith and good Works. When Arrius's Doctrine came to be examin'd, Alexander, Bishop of Constantinople, despis'd the Niceties of Logick, and had Recourse only to the Grace of God. Lastly, Thomas Aquinas, that celebrated Doctor of the School, has affirm'd, That our Understandings are so enslav'd, and so closely chain'd by our Senses, that they can apprehend nothing perfectly; and that their Weakness is such, that if they come once to judge of Things which are certain in themselves, they shall become uncertain.





CHAP. III.

Proof: ii. *That Man cannot be perfectly and entirely certain, that an external Object doth exactly answer the imprinted Idea he has of it. Because 1st. The Images, Forms or Shadows, which emanate from external Bodies, are no Ways like them. 2d. We may justly doubt of the Fidelity of the interposing Medium through which the Images or Shadows pass from the outward Object, to the Organs of our Sensation. 3d. The Fidelity of our Senses is doubtful. 4th. The Fidelity of the Nerves and animal Spirits is doubtful. 5th. The Fidelity of the Brain is doubtful. 6th. The Fidelity of our Mind or Understanding is doubtful, and its Nature unknown to us.*

WE come now to shew, from the Nature of the Things themselves, that Man cannot by the Help of Reason attain to a certain and perfect Knowledge of Truth. I have said before, that Truth is that Agreement which is between the Object

Object without, and the Judgment which our Understanding forms of it from the Idea of it within us. Now no Man can be certain of this Agreement, till he be first of all sure that the Image or Form which flows from that external Object, of what Nature soever it be, is the true and real Image of that Object. In the next Place, he must be sure that this Image or Form is convey'd to the Organs of Sensation, whole, and without receiving any Alteration from any interposing Matter. Again, he must be very certain that the Organs of Sense after they have been mov'd, by the Arrival of this Image, when they give Notice to the Brain of this Motion, by Means of the Fibres of the Body, have been faithful Messengers, and have given a true Intelligence without altering any Part of it. Furthermore, it is requisite that he should be very sure, that when the Brain is stirr'd by this Information, and gives Notice of it to the Soul, to which it is join'd, it doth faithfully represent Things as they are, and without any Alteration. Lastly, a Man ought to be sure that the Judgment which the Soul forms from such Intelligence is just and true. Now all these Things are of such a Nature, that what Pains soever the subtlest Philosopher may take, he cannot alledge one Proof of their Certainty, and we, on the contrary, have a great deal of Reason to doubt of the Agreement of these Forms or Images of the external

external Object, with the Object it self; of the Fidelity of the Medium, through which these Forms do pass from the Object to the Organ of Sense; of the Fidelity of Sense and of the Brain, and of the Perception of the Soul.

1st, F O R first, Who will dare to affirm, *The Forms or Shadows which come from external Objects, and present themselves to us, are not like them.* that the Form, Image or Shadow, which flows from any external Body, which presents it self to us, is its real Likeness, without any Difference? I don't pretend here to examine what an Image is, it being foreign from our present Purpose; nevertheless, I make use of the Notions and Terms which are commonly us'd in the Schools of Philosophy. By what Art or Industry shall my Understanding, which is to judge of this Likeness, be able to compare the external Object with its Image; seeing both are without my Understanding, and that this latter can be neither stated nor consider'd, and that some Men have even doubted whether it did really exist?

SUPPOSING however, that it can be examin'd, and that we may judge of it, we shall doubtless find them very unlike; for a Form or Image that comes from a Tree, is it a Tree? And if it be not one, can it be like one? For we certainly abuse the Word *Likeness*, when we say, that a Picture or Statue is like the Original. The Question is here, about a true and perfect Likeness, such as represents not only the outward Shape,

Shape, Bigness, Colour, &c. but likewise all the Proprieties of the whole Body, and the Parts which compose it, as well within as without; to which if any Thing is wanting, there will be a Difference, *quoad hoc*, so that we shall not be able to know the outward Object as it really is: Now 'tis certain, that the Form or Image of a Tree differs in many Things from the Tree. The Tree is visible, solid, immoveable, whereas its Image is not visible, has no Consistence, is very thin and fluid, and moveable.

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2. BUT should we grant the Form or Image of the external Object, to be entirely like the Object it self; it is nevertheless certain, from numberless Experiments, that the Medium, through which this Image passes to come at, and shake the Organ of Sensation, is very changeable and uncertain. Let us consider, for Instance, the Form or Image of Colour in an Object; it is plain, the Colour we see in an Object in the Evening, is different from what we saw at Noon-day; and that which is seen by the Light of the Sun, looks different from that which is seen by Candle-light. If you darken a Room, and set Fire to some Aquavita, in which you have dissolv'd some Salt, or set some Sulphur a burning in a new Vessel, as *Pliny* reports, that the Physician *Anaxilaus* did for his Diversion, every one in the Room will look as pale as a dead Corpse, and you'll fancy them to be all walking Ghosts, if

we look on a House through the Smoke of a lighted Flame, it shall seem to stir and dance. We observe a great Variety of Colours in Objects that are near us, but if we behold them at a greater Distance, they will all appear of the same Colour, which is generally a pale Blue, such as is observ'd in the Sea, or the Sky, tho' neither of them are of that Colour; for the Sea Blue will change, according to the different Winds that blow, sometimes into a Purple, and sometimes into a yellowish Green. I shall not mention here the vast and glorious Bodies of the Planets, whose Magnitude we know by the Help of the Mathematicks, which however seem so very small to the naked Eye. Neither need we insist on the Waterman's Oar, which though straight, yet to the Eye appears crooked, or bent in the Place where it touches the Surface of the Water, or the painted and colour'd Glasses, which communicate their Colour to all the Objects we look upon through them, or that of Chrystal Prisms, which tho' they consist of three flat Surfaces, and are made of pure, clear and transparent Matter, yet if we lay them close to our Eye, will represent all the external Bodies of a round Figure, and painted with the finest Variety of Colours. Those who look upon Leaf-Gold against the Light, will see them perfectly green, though they are actually yellow.

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THE very same Thing we may affirm of Sounds and Smells, which to us appear different, according to the Medium through which they are convey'd to us; it is therefore certain, that the Images, Forms or Shadows of external Bodies, are subject to infinite Alterations, according to the Variety and the Change of the Medium through which they pass.

The Fidelity of our Senses is doubtful.

3. NEVERTHELESS, let us suppose that these Images or *Exuviae*, to use *Apuleus's* Term, which flow continually from Bodies, are receiv'd by our Senses without any Alteration, yet how many Arguments have Philosophers brought to prove the Deceitfulness of our Senses? I shall mention but one, and I can't see what Answer can be made to it.

SURE it is, that our Senses depend upon the Organs of Sensation; we feel those Sensations very different, when the Organs are brisk and sound, to what we do when they are disorder'd and languid. Many Things, which pleas'd our Taste when we were young, are become unpleasant, or even loathsome to us in our riper Years. Many there are who see an Object bigger with one Eye, than they do with the other; if therefore the Diversity of our Senses is so great, that we cannot see any Conformity in them, even in the same Person, we must own that this Diversity is still vastly greater in that infinite Multitude of Men, whose Bodies and
Organs

Organs of Sensation, which depend from them, are so vastly different ; for if the Difference of Faces be so great, that it seems as if Nature had design'd it in Sport, or to shew her Fecundity ; and if amongst so great a Number of them, we cannot find any two exactly alike, can we think that there is no Difference in the inward Frame and Disposition of their Bodies, when their outward Shape and Make is so vastly different. If we can be silly enough to think it, I am sure the Physicians will justly laugh at us, seeing they have in their Dissections found as great a Diversity in the inward Parts.

WE must confess therefore, that our Senses don't feel outward Objects, but only the Impression of the Images or Forms which flow from without them, and that this Impression, which comes from without, has not the same Effect in every Man, but is differently felt according to the Diversity of the Organs of Sense ; in the same Manner as Sounds are different, according to the different Bigness and Tension of the Strings that cause them ; and therefore we cannot know which of all the Sensations which are produc'd in different Persons, by the same Object, differs most from that Object.

THIS is very elegantly express'd by the Satyrist in these Words : *Our Eyes deceive us, and the Uncertainty of our Senses imposes upon our Reason. The same Tower, which at a small Distance appears to me*
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four square, will appear round at a greater Distance. A Man loaths even Honey when his Belly is full, and our Noses are sometimes averse to the sweetest Perfumes. One Thing would never please better than another, if our Senses were not continually at War one with the other.

The Fidelity of the Nerves and animal Spirits is doubtful.

4. BUT let us go on with our condescending Temper, and suppose still, as we have done before, that the Testimony of our Senses is faithful, when they receive any Forms or Images from without, which carry a sure and particular Description of the outward Object, such as they could not give the like of any other Object from which they did not proceed, a Thing which *Zeno* thought very necessary, in order to our Knowledge of the Truth; Who shall be able to answer for the Fidelity of the Senses, when they come to communicate to the Understanding the Impression they have receiv'd? For in order to this they make use of Fibres and Nerves, the Frame and Disposition of which being so very different, it follows that they cannot give an uniform Information to the Understanding; they make use likewise of animal Spirits, which do not equally abound in all Men, and whose Activity and Motion is very different.

I know that *Des Cartes* believ'd, and has persuaded a great many, that the animal Spirits come from the Brain to the nervous Vessels, and spread themselves round the inward

ward Fibres of the Nerves, and that they serv'd to excite a Motion in the Muscles; that those Fibres are like to fine small Threads, join'd together in the Form of Strings, which extend themselves on every Side, quite to the Extremities of the external Members, and are subservient to the Organs of Sense; inso-much that this last being shaken by the Form or Image of an outward Object, the Fibres, which are join'd to those Organs, are likewise shaken; and that being surrounded and swell'd by those animal Spirits, they carry, with a great deal of Swiftmess, the Motion to the Brain, which was communicated to them in the Extremities and external Parts of the Body; in the same Manner that the String of a Violin which is touch'd at one End, doth immediately vibrate at the other.

As for my Part, who have been fully convinc'd by several Dissections I have made of living Animals, that the Vessels of the Nerves, which are dispers'd all over the Body, how swell'd soever they be by the animal Spirits, are very slack and crooked, and winding after a different Manner; and that they easily stretch and contract themselves by the Motion of the Part to which they are fasten'd; I can't understand how they can be like a String, or how they can carry the Motion which they had receiv'd at one of their Extremities, to the Brain with that prodigious Swiftmess. However, let us suppose

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pose that this may be done some Way or other, yet it is certain, that the animal Spirits are much more proper to perform it, because of their extraordinary Fineness and Lightness, and as they fill the Cavity of the Nerves, it's easy to understand how the Motion, which is communicated to them from without, is immediately convey'd to the Brain: For although the Vessels which contain these Spirits be never so crooked and winding, they will still keep their Form and Disposition. In the like Manner, when we blow a common Trumper, which is crooked, if when you apply your Mouth to the one End of it, you put your Hand to the other End, you will find that the Air, from within, doth push against your Hand, at the same Time that it is mov'd by the Breath of your Mouth.

NEITHER is there any Thing in the usual Case of a Palsy, (where the Distemper has took away the Use and Motion of a Limb, without taking away its Feeling) that contradicts this Opinion; for that Limb receives its Motion from a great Quantity of animal Spirits, which are carried to the Muscles by the Nerves; but if the Brain fails of furnishing that Quantity of Spirits which is necessary to swell the Muscles; or if the Muscle doth not receive them, but that there remains only as much as is requisite to fill the Nerve; the Sense of Feeling will continue still, though without the Motion.

tion. It may likewise be that, as there are several Fibres hidden in the Concavity of the Nerves, some of them may be design'd to furnish the Muscles with animal Spirits, and to convey them to the Extremities of the Body, and so cause their Motion. In like Manner the Blood, being carry'd from the Heart to the extreme Parts by the Arteries, is brought back by the Veins of those Extremities to the Heart again. But this by the By. We shall only add to what has been said, that the Spirits are sometimes in such Agitation through Sickness, Sleep, hard Drinking, and the like, and the Fibres of the Brain are so violently shaken, that the Brain thereby receives very different Impressions, insomuch that the Understanding doth think it has some Sentiments which the Organs of Sensation never had.

BESIDES, the Brain, which is as it were *The Fidelity of the Brain is doubtful:* the Citadel of the Soul, the Elaboratory of Reason, and the Work-man of Perception, be it what it will, is not of the same Make and Structure in all Men; we see that some have it less, and some bigger; the Configuration of the Head, which is a certain Mark of that of the Brain, is so vastly different in Men, that whole Nations have round Heads, others have it long, some have theirs sharp pointed like a Sugar-Loaf, and many have it flat; and every Body knows that that the Soundness of the Understanding, the Quickness of Wit, and Goodness

of Memory, do depend very much upon the Shape, Make and Disposition of the Brain.

IT is one of the Philosopher *Parmenides's* Maxims, (*Parm. apud Aristot. Metaph. Lib. iii. cap. 3.*) that the Disposition of our Understanding depends upon the Disposition of the Parts of the Body: Experience, confirm'd by a common Proverb, teaches us, that those, who have great Heads, are generally Men of Sense, and that a small Head is always attended with a light and fickle Wit. *Hypocrates*, tells us, (*de aq. aer. & locis, Sect. 3.*) That the Nation of *Macrocephali*, that is to say, *Long Heads*, being persuaded that the Length of the Head did contribute very much to the Valour of a Man, did at first make use of Art to lengthen their Childrens Heads, till in Time Nature, being become obedient to Art, had given that Shape to the Heads of that whole Nation.

THERSITES, whom *Homer* has represented as so silly and foolish a Man, had his Head of that very Shape. Hence comes the Proverb, So many Heads, so many Minds; for from that Diversity of the Organs of Sensation, of Fibres, animal Spirits, Brains, Heads, &c. and from their various Makes and Changes, proceeds that Diversity of Opinions we see in the World. Hence it comes likewise, that they so often change, rejecting, in their riper Years, what they admir'd

admir'd in their Youth, and that sometimes in one Day, nay in the Space of one Hour, the same Man shall alter his Mind and Inclinations, contradict and perplex himself with so great a Variety of Desires and Opinions.

BUT supposing that all these Organs, which are so deceitful, and so little to be rely'd on, were ever so faithful and unquestionable, we shall still be in the Dark about the Manner of the Soul's perceiving those Forms or Images which are imprinted on the Brain; how she judges of the Things she perceives, and lastly, in what Manner those Images, which are merely corporeal and material, can make an Impression on the Soul, which is wholly spiritual and immaterial.

SINCE therefore we don't know in *The Fidelity of the Mind is doubtful, and unknown to us.* what Manner the Impression, which is made upon the Brain, can reach the Soul, and that the Soul doth nevertheless find herself mov'd and affected in some Manner by the Brain, which had been likewise mov'd by a corporeal Motion, so that she shall be able to comprehend the outward Object after a certain Manner; as for Instance, she shall frame an Idea of the Sun, as of a radiant and luminous Globe, and yet be doubtful whether that very Figure be found in the Eye, or another different from it. On the contrary, the Soul is convinc'd that Image of the Sun is represented in the Eye as turn'd upside-down, though she finds within her an

Idea of the Sun which is not inverted. She is likewise sure that all the Objects, that come through the Eye to her, are represented in a Situation contrary to that in which they offer themselves to the Eye, that that which appears to her uppermost, is lowermost in the Eye, and that which appears to her on the right, is on the left Side of the Eye.

THE Soul is likewise doubtful, whether the Image which is Part of the Sun, be like that which is represented in the Eye. She doth not so much as know whether any Image of the Sun was represented in the Eye, or whether she herself did not form that Idea from the Print which was before engraven on the Brain, as those Ideas are which are form'd in our Sleep, in a Delirium, or when we are drunk, which however have no Reality; or as those which we form our selves when we are awake, sober and in our Senses.

BESIDES, Men have taken an infinite deal of Pains, and bestow'd a great deal of Time in Study and Debates, to find out the Nature of Human Understanding, the noblest Faculty of the Soul, in what Part of the Body it is seated, what are its Operations, and whether Nature in the forming of it has imprinted any Ideas on it, or whether it has none but what it receives by the Ministry of the Senses; and this very Diversity of Mens Opinions, the Difference

ference of their Ideas, their different Conceptions of Things, which are the proper Operations of the Mind, do sufficiently shew how variable, uncertain, and unknown the Nature of the Understanding is. Now all these Questions and Disputes about the Nature of the Understanding can be only decided by the Understanding it self, whose Nature being so uncertain and doubtful, how shall a doubtful Thing be decided by another doubtful Thing? Can the Taste taste itself? Can the Smell smell itself, or the Sight see it self?

IN order to our right and perfect Apprehension of the Nature of the Understanding, we should certainly have another Understanding; for there is no other Faculty in us, whereby we may come to the Knowledge of it: And if it be true that it is unknown to us, and that we don't know what it can do; with what Assurance can we make use of a Thing that is unknown to us, in order to apprehend other Things which are equally unknown to us; or what Credit can we give to, or how be satisfied about any Thing we have apprehended by such Means.

SINCE then the Forms or Images of external Objects, which are the Origin of our Ideas, are subject to such Changes and Uncertainties, since our outward Senses are so obtuse and dull, since their Organs are so feeble; since the Nature of our Understand-

ing is so unknown to us, how can we promise our selves any certain Knowledge of the Agreement, between the outward Object which presents it self to us, and the Idea of that Object which is imprinted in our Souls ?



C H A P. IV.

Proof iii. That Human Understanding cannot know the Nature of Things with a perfect Certainty.



WE have still one evident Proof of our natural Ignorance, which is, that the Essence of Things is such, that it is incomprehensible to our Understanding ; for having before prov'd, that Nature has form'd Man, and dispos'd his Understanding in such a Manner, that he cannot attain to a sure and perfect Knowledge of external Objects, although this might suffice to cut off all Hopes of our ever coming to a certain Knowledge of Truth by the Help of Reason ; nevertheless, if I prove further, that the Nature of Things, and even of Man himself is such, that it cannot be known by Man, Human Understanding will be left without any the least Foundation of Assurance : Since
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I shall have prov'd on the one Hand, that Man cannot naturally have any certain Knowledge of Things, and on the other Hand, that the Things themselves are in their Nature such, that they cannot be perfectly and certainly known by Man, which last I come now to prove.

It is impossible to know the Essence of any Thing, unless we know in what it agrees, and in what it differs from others; that is, unless we understand its *Genus* and *Differentia*, for all Philosophers agree, that the Essence of Things consists in this; and that the best Definition that can be given of them is, that which shews their *Genus* and *Differentia*. Now if these two cannot be known, neither can we ever know their Definition or Essence; but we cannot know the *Genus* of a Thing, that is, in what it agrees with another of a different Species, unless we know the Essence of both, therefore it is necessary that we should know the Essence of the Thing whose Genus we want to know, but we have been shewing, that in order to know the Essence of that Thing, we must first know its *Genus*, and if so, the *Genus* and *Essentia* have need of one another, in order to their being known, and the Knowledge of the one depends on the Knowledge of the other. So that we fall into a Circle which is a defective Way of Reasoning, that proves nothing.

WE may affirm the same of the *Differentia*, that we have of the *Genus*; for I can never know in what a Thing differs from another, unless I know them both: One Instance will make this plainer still.

IF we ask the Professors of Philosophy, what Man is, they will answer, That Man is a rational Animal; here you have the *Genus* and the *Differentia*. Now the *Genus* ought to be equally common to all the *Species* which are compris'd under that *Genus*; and therefore Man ought to be an Animal in the same Manner that a Horse is an Animal: For if Man be an Animal after a different Manner from a Horse, there will be some Difference in the *Genus*, *quatenus Genus*, and consequently it will not be a *Genus*; but now how will you be sure that Man and Horse are equally Animals, if you do not understand the Nature of both? Nay, if you do not perfectly know what an Animal is; which last is as uncertain as the other. For if you ask those very Philosophers what an Animal is, they will answer, that it is that which lives, feels, or that which has Life and Sense: But now, my dear Masters, how can you be sure that Man and Horse do equally feel, or that the Sensation of a Man is entirely equal to that of a Horse?

BUT if we will believe *Des Cartes*, that new Inventer of Truth, he will tell you that a Horse doth feel the Spurs that gaul him,

him, no more than a Tree doth the Hatchet that cuts it. Besides, we know that there are some Plants which give some Tokens of Sensation when they are touch'd, though they are not therefore Animals, nor consequently Horses. To these we may add, that we see a Man or a Horse, but that we don't see an Animal, but when we see a Man, a Horse, a Fish, a Bird, or some other Animal, and therefore we can't know an Animal which is the *Genus*, but by its *Species*, and yet we were but just now endeavouring to know the *Species* by the *Genus*. We therefore fall into that erroneous Kind of Reasoning, which is call'd *Diallelis*, which is as much as to say, Alternatory which is, when in order to prove a Thing in Question, we have recourse to another Thing, the Proof of which doth depend on that very Thing which was in dispute.

BESIDES, since we must know the *Genus* of a Thing, in order to know the Thing it self; in order to know the Essence of the *Genus*, we must likewise know its *Genus*, and the *Genus* of that *Genus*, and so on, upwards *ad infinitum*, and so either we shall never come to the Knowledge of the Thing we seek, or else we shall be forc'd to stop at some superior *Genus*, whose *Genus* is unknown to us. Now if we don't know the *Genus* of that superior *Genus*, we shall be likewise ignorant of that superior *Genus*, and consequently of all others that depend upon

upon it, and so of the Thing in Question. Let us now come to the *Differentia*, which together with the *Genus* makes up the Essence of Man.

THIS Difference is drawn from Reason, with which he is pretended to be endow'd, now this is the very Thing in Question in our present Enquiry, *viz.* Whether Man be endow'd with Reason, and be capable of Reasoning; and if we cannot be sure that he can reason, we cannot be sure that he is a rational Creature, or that Reason is his *Differentia*; however, let us suppose him reasonable, how are we sure that he is the only one that is so?

WE have the Writings of some great Philosophers, who held, that other Animals were likewise endow'd with Reason. No one can decide that Controversy, unless he first know what Man is, and what the other Animals are: We must therefore come back to the very Thing in Question, *viz.* What Man is, in doing which, we seek, in that which is unknown, the Knowledge of that which is unknown, without ever being able to extricate our selves out of the Labyrinth.





C H A P. V.

Proof. iv. *That Things can never be perfectly and certainly known by reason of their continual Changes.*

HERE is still another, and that a
T manifest Cause, which hinders us
 from the Knowledge of Things, *viz.*
 the continual Change they are liable to;
 which Change is such, that they cannot continue the least Time in one Condition. To express this Mutability of Bodies, the ancient Philosophers have compar'd them to a running River, which is very applicable to the Subject in Hand; for as *Heracitus* has very well observ'd, No Man ever went twice into the same River; because the Waters that did flow yesterday from that Part of the River where a Man went in, are already gone, and others have come into their Room, which do likewise run away in a Moment; and as the Philosopher *Cratylus*, did no less speak Truth, when he affirm'd, that one cannot so much as once enter into the same River; so that very Horse that carries you now, and which you fancy you know very well, is not the same Horse that carried you yesterday, nay, is not the same
 that

that carried you but a Moment ago. Time has run away with some Part of it. His Flesh, Bones, Skin, Hair, &c. are changed by the Food he has taken, and the Excrements he has voided, by his Growth, by Transpiration and Respiration, by the external and internal Heat, by the Access of the Circumambient Air, by the animal Spirits which flow from him, and the new Supply of Matter repairing the Loss of that which is gone.

WHEREFORE *Plato*, and all those ancient Philosophers whom he has quoted in his *Theatetis*, I mean *Empedocles*, *Heraclitus*, *Protagoras*; and the greatest Part of the other Philosophers, excepting *Parmenides*, and those Poets whom *Seneca* has follow'd; (*Epist.* 58.) viz. *Homer*, and *Epicharmus*; all these I say, have affirm'd, That all Things are, but that no one of them doth so exist as that one may be able to say, that it is a sure, fix'd, and permanent Thing. Hence it follows, That when I apply my self to the Study of a Thing, it will cease to be what it was, even before I can have fix'd my Thoughts upon such an Enquiry: This made *Cratylus* affirm, That Man ought to say nothing, and that he ought to content himself with wagging his Finger. Now as those Things which we call Universals, are made up of Singulars and Particulars, and that we cannot know Particulars, because they escape us by
reason

reason of that continual Change and Flux which attends them; it follows that we cannot know the Universals, which are made up of them.

THIS Reasoning made such an Impression upon St. *Austin's* Mind, (*quest.* 83. *quest.* 9.) that he drew this Inference from it, *That we must expect no perfect Knowledge of the Truth from our Senses*; and *Aristotle*, being desirous to confute this very Argument, took such a frivolous Method, that he has rather confirm'd it, (*Aristot. Metaph. Lib. iii. cap. 5.* but let us go a little further.

I F all Things be really subject to Change, I must of Consequence be subject to it my self, so that every Hour, nay, every Moment, even whilst I am speaking, I become another Man; and though this Change is not easily perceiv'd in so short a Time, yet is it easily discover'd some Time after; how shall therefore Man, who is so changeable, so varying, and so inconstant in himself, be able to judge with any Certainty of every Thing else.





C H A P. VI.

Proof. v. *That Nothing can be certainly known by reason of the Difference of Men.*

IF Men be so subject to Change, that not one of them can continue never so little a Time, to be like himself, there must certainly be an infinite Difference in such a vast Multitude of Men, as I have already observ'd; and from so great a Variety, what Conformity of Judgment, what Agreement, what Certainty can be expected? How can I be sure that That which appears to me, doth appear in the same Manner to you, or that That which seems white to me, seems so to you? Or that the Colour which you and I call white, doth appear the same to you that it doth to me?

SINCE therefore Things appear different to us, or at least, since we cannot be sure that they appear alike to that great Multitude of Men, who either see Things differently, or are uncertain whether they all see them alike or no, which of them shall we judge to see Things as they really are? And in such an universal Agreement, what Rule shall we fix upon, which of all Men to believe above the rest?

T H E

THE Poet *Euripides* did clearly discover this Defect of human Nature, when he made *Etheocles* to say, (*Phœniss. vs. 304, 305.* that amongst Men, there is nothing alike, except the Names of Things, but that as for the Things themselves, they had nothing steady, nothing certain in them.

THE Philosopher *Protagoras* acknowledged as much, which made him to affirm, that every Man was the Rule of Truth to himself; but as for me, I dare further affirm, That no Man can be the Rule of Truth to himself, by reason of that Difference, I have been speaking of, which is not only betwixt all Men, but likewise between one and the same Person.

C H A P. VII.

Proof vi. *That Things cannot be perfectly and certainly known, because their Causes are infinite.*



O all the preceding Proofs we must add one more, *viz.* that all sub-lunary Things are so linked together, that we cannot conceive one without an other, nor that other without conceiving a Third, nor this Third without a Fourth, and so on, till going from one Thing to another, our Mind has run over that infinite Multitude of Things, of which this World is compos'd. Now it

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being impossible for Human Understanding to know all Things, or to know any one Thing without knowing them all, it follows that he can know nothing.

SUPPOSE for Instance, that I want to know what Man is, as he consists of Soul and Body, and is endow'd with Reason; I can never know what he is, unless I know the Nature of the Body, of the Soul, and of Reason: Our Bodies being compos'd of Fire, Water, Earth and Air, I ought to know the Nature of these four Elements, in order to know the Nature of Man. I begin first to search into the Nature of Fire, and read all that Philosophers have said concerning it, If I consult *Des Cartes*, I find that I cannot learn from him what the Nature of Fire is, until I be fully instructed in, and acquainted with the System he has invented; neither will it be sufficient for me to have learn'd it, for I must examine it, and compare it with the Systems of other Philosophers, and I must judge which of them all is the truest, in order to which, I must go back to the Knowledge of the first Causes, which have been hitherto unknown.

FROM thence I must go on to find out the Nature of Water, then that of Air, and lastly, that of Earth; in all which Enquiries we shall find the very same Difficulties, after which I must be obliged to look into the Fabrick of our Body, and the Structure and Use of all its Parts; and this will afford
Matter

HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

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Matter for endless Labour and Study; every one of these Things, notwithstanding the many Experiments and Disputes of so many Years about their Nature, remaining still very obscure and uncertain.

NEITHER can we excuse our selves from enquiring how Man is ingendered; it being no less Important than difficult to understand what Generation is, what are the Causes of it, what the Father, and what the Mother contribute towards it; whence that Faculty of engendring comes; how the Child is form'd in his Mother's Womb; how it receives its Nourishment there, and who gives it Strength and Industry to break out of that Prison, whether Man can be begotten without a Father, or without a Mother, as some have believ'd, why a Male or a Female is begot, why a Child shall prove flat-nosed, why his Hair shall curl, why one shall be very small, why another shall be cholerick or sanguine, why given to Women, why a great Eater, or a great Drunkard, why sickly, why healthy and long liv'd; and thus you see what an Infinity of Things must be known.

BUT let us suppose that they may all be known, we shall find still some unsurmountable Difficulties, when we come to the Nature of the Soul, to consider what it is, where it is, how it acts, what are the Effects of its Operation; how it is join'd to the Body, &c. if you could know all these, you will be oblig'd still to go further, and

examine what Reason is, what its Use, and what its Effects are, and this will oblige you to understand the whole Art of Logick thoroughly: in a Word, it would be endless to enumerate all those Things which are necessary to be known, in order to attain to the Knowledge of Man, and our whole Life would not suffice to know the least Part of what must be known, before we can thoroughly know any one Thing; it is therefore better to stop short, lest we should undertake an useless Labour.

C H A P. VIII.

Proof vii. *That Man has no certain Rule of Truth.*

WE have still another, and that a principal and irrefragable Argument, against the Temerity of *Dogmatists*, viz. that it has pleas'd God to deprive human Nature of a certain Rule of Truth; for as every Thing is so blended with Truth and Falshood, that we can scarce distinguish them, and often mistake the one for the other; how shall we be able to make a right Judgment of them, unless we had a certain Rule of Truth, by the Application of which we might be certainly convinc'd, that whatever agrees with

it is true, and what disagrees with it is false? It was for this Reason that the Philosophers, who apply'd themselves to the Search of Truth, did use all the Endeavours their Wit and Industry was capable of, to find out this Rule. They gave it the Name of *Criterium*, and made it twofold, one to direct our Actions, the other to direct our Opinions. The whole Life of Man is regulated by the first, and all his Knowledge depends upon the second; and this being once well settled, we shall by the Help of it be able to distinguish Truth from Falshood; and this is what we call the Rule or *ratio* of Truth.

THIS *Criterium* may be taken several Ways, but at present we only seek after that which is properly the Measure of Apprehension or Perception; by Means of which Measure, if rightly us'd, we may understand those Things which are obscure: We shall here speak only of this *Criterium* or Rule of Truth, which makes use of Reason to attain to the Knowledge of Truth.

THIS *Criterium*, is threefold, *viz.* the *Criterium of which, the Criterium by which, and the Criterium according to which, The Criterium of which* is Man; for the Question is about the Knowledge of Truth which Man is desirous to attain to. *The Criterium by which* is the Means or Organs which Man makes use of to know Truth, such as our Senses or Understanding; and the *Criterium according to which* is the Action of

Of the Weakness of

the Understanding, which applies the *Criterium* by which, to the Search of Truth.

THE Uncertainty and Insufficiency of these three Kinds of *Criterium*, in order to the Knowledge of Truth, has been heretofore clearly and sufficiently proved by other Authors, for the Nature of Man being still unknown to us, notwithstanding all the fruitless Endeavours and Debates of Philosophers to the contrary, it is still more unknown to us, whether it can attain to the Knowledge of Truth; it follows therefore, that the *Criterium* of which, that is, human Nature, is uncertain.

NOW if this be the Case, as it plainly is, it follows that the Organs of Sense, or the Impressions which they receive, their most inward Motion, and Fancy otherwise called Imagination, which is the Impression or Impulse caus'd in the Soul by an outward Object, and the Modifications of the Mind, which Philosophers call *Visum*, all which are the *Criterium by which*, are still more uncertain. Nay, the Understanding it self (which according to some) and Reason (which according to others,) is the *Criterium by which*, are equally uncertain; for it is impossible to know the Faculties of a Nature which is unknown.

THE Faculties being unknown, the Actions must be so likewise; and in these consists the *Criterium according to which*. I did not undertake to mention every Thing that
might

might be said on this Head, having still so great a Way to go, that we cannot stop long at every Place; especially considering that there are few but do know what is taught in the Schools of Philosophy, concerning the Deceitfulness of our Senses and Understandings, for there is no Subject which the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* are more proud and forward to contend for than this. I shall therefore content my self with offering some Proofs which do entirely discredit and explode this Rule or *Criterion* of Truth.

SINCE Truth cannot be known without such a Rule or *Criterion* of Truth, it will be very necessary to find it, before we begin our Search after the Knowledge of Truth. Now we can never find this *Criterion*, unless we can know a true one from a false one, in order to which, our first Enquiry must be whether the true *Criterion* bears any certain Marks of Truth, by Means of which we may, and without which we cannot know it; but how shall we know these Marks of Truth, if we don't know Truth? We ought therefore to find out Truth before we can be able to find out its *Criterion*; and the *Criterion* ought to be found out, before Truth can be discover'd: Now since neither Truth, nor the *Criterion* have been found out, it follows that neither the one nor the other can be attain'd.

BESIDES, the *Criterion* being the Rule of Truth, we ought first to settle this Rule, and see that it be right and straight before we apply it to Truth; for if it be not right, or if we are not sure that it is so, it will not be a certain Rule, neither can we ever trust to it; but we can neither make it right and straight, nor be sure that it is so, unless we have some other Rule of Truth, which we certainly know to be right, to try and rectify the other by. This Second ought to be likewise try'd and rectify'd by a Third, and this Third by a Fourth, and so *ad infinitum*; These Matters having been amply and fully explain'd by the Philosopher *Sextus Empiricus*, a Man of a subtle and penetrating Wit, who has humbled the Pride of the *Dogmatists* more than any one else; I have contented my self with a summary Abridgement of them.





C H A P. IX.

Proof viii. *Wherein 1st. the Evidence of Sense and Reason, is confuted. 2d. Shewing that the Objects which present themselves to the Minds of those that are asleep, drunk or mad, are as evident as the Objects which present themselves to the Minds of those who are awake, sober and in their Senses.*

1. **T**HOSE who boast of an Ability *The Evidence of*
A to come to a perfect Knowledge of *Sense, &c.*
T Truth, by Means of some Rule *is confuted.*
 or *Criterion* of Truth, do agree that it is
 further necessary that we should have a clear
 and distinct Perception of Things, either by
 the Help of the Senses, or of Reason, or
 by any other possible Means; so that it is
 requisite that the Mind should have a distinct
 and evident Idea of a Thing, in order to
 its right apprehending it. This is the Lan-
 guage of all *Dogmatists*, wherein they don't
 perceive that they make the Knowledge of
 Truth still more difficult; and that instead of
 one *Criterion*, they require Two, *viz.* the
 Idea

BESIDES, the *Criterion* being the Rule of Truth, we ought first to settle this Rule, and see that it be right and straight before we apply it to Truth; for if it be not right, or if we are not sure that it is so, it will not be a certain Rule, neither can we ever trust to it; but we can neither make it right and straight, nor be sure that it is so, unless we have some other Rule of Truth, which we certainly know to be right, to try and rectify the other by. This Second ought to be likewise try'd and rectify'd by a Third, and this Third by a Fourth, and so *ad infinitum*; These Matters having been amply and fully explain'd by the Philosopher *Sextus Empiricus*, a Man of a subtle and penetrating Wit, who has humbled the Pride of the *Dogmatists* more than any one else; I have contented my self with a summary Abridgement of them.





CHAP. IX.

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1. **THE** **A** **L** **L** those who boast of an Ability The Evidence of Sense, &c. is confuted. to come to a perfect Knowledge of Truth, by Means of some Rule or Criterion of Truth, do agree that it is further necessary that we should have a clear and distinct Perception of Things, either by the Help of the Senses, or of Reason, or by any other possible Means; so that it is requisite that the Mind should have a distinct and evident Idea of a Thing, in order to its right apprehending it. This is the Language of all *Dogmatists*, wherein they don't perceive that they make the Knowledge of Truth still more difficult; and that instead of one *Criterion*, they require Two, *viz.* the Idea

Idea of the Thing, and the Evidence of that Idea. Now if it be plain that there is no *Criterion*, as I have just before prov'd that there could be none, it follows that the Evidence, which is the Companion of *Criterion*, cannot subsist: To which you may add, that there is nothing evident but what is so to all the World; for if no Man will admit a Thing to be evident, but what appears so to him, Truth and Falshood will be equally evident, for every one of those, who hold contrary Opinions, will alledge Evidence for a Proof of his Opinion. Now as there is nothing so evident, as to appear so to all the World, it follows that there can be no Evidence at all. One cannot therefore sufficiently admire the Blindness and Ignorance of those Philosophers, who, boasting that they had Evidence on their Side, cannot see that which is most evident, *viz.* the Deceitfulness of Evidence, which takes the Part of any two opposite Parties indifferently, and lends its Assistance to either of them against the other; and that we can never reap any Benefit or Advantage from such an Assistance, till all the Philosophers be agreed and re-united into one and the same Sect. Can any Man, how clear and distinct soever his Notions of Things be, have the Confidence to think that he is the only wise Man in the World, and that all the rest are mad? Doth not Evidence it self often deceive the same Person, who finds a Thing false in his
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old Age, which in his younger Years seem'd to him evidently true.

LET us attend to what *Sophocles* says, (*Oedip. Tur. v. f. 639. & seq.*) *Never did any two Friends, or any two Nations, follow the same Sentiments towards one another, for sooner or later they will all find the same Things, bitter and sweet.* To which we may add the Saying of *Terence*, (*Adelph. Act. v. Sc. 4.*) *That no Man ever order'd his Life so wisely, but that the State of Things, Time, or Custom, would afford him some Novelty, and Instruction to convince him, that he was ignorant of what he fancied he knew; and that he ought to reject what he might have thought most desirable.* Now which of all those Evidences shall we believe or follow, that of Youth, that of Manhood, or that of old Age? Did *Dionysius of Heraclea*, (who, overcome by Excess of Pain, turn'd from the Sect of the *Stoicks*, to that of *Epicurus*, and was therefore surnam'd the *Inconstant*.) Did he, I say, find any Obscurity or Confusion in every Thing, whilst he kept to the Sect of the *Stoicks*?

NAY, I will venture to affirm further, That that which appears to the Mind in Sleep, or when a Man is drunk or light-headed, is no less evident, than that which appears to us when we are awake, sober and in our Senses. When we wake or are recover'd from a drunken Fit or Madness, we

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do indeed find that we had been mistaken ; but we could never be sensible of it, whilst the Fit of Sleep, Drunkenness, or Madness held us. Nay, we sometimes question in our Sleep, whether we are dreaming or awake, and after we have consider'd a while, we persuade our selves that we are awake, and have in our Thoughts a perfect Evidence of what then presents it self to our Mind.

DID not the Man of *Argos*, who dream'd that he was at a Play, and was the only one who clapp'd an empty Stage, believe that he clearly saw the Action, and heard the Words of the Actors? Are not the Transports of a Madman, his Fears, his Anger, &c. manifest Tokens that his Mind is possess'd and violently mov'd by the Images of some strange Object? How many are there, who, though asleep, do nevertheless give exact and rational Answers to every Thing that is ask'd them? How many make fine Verses in their Sleep; nay, some will even climb up to the Tops of Houses, and walk upon them with all seeming Circumspection; all which could never be, were they not prompted to it by some very clear Ideas. Have not these, who fancy themselves present at some nocturnal Feast of Witches, very clear Ideas of Things which nevertheless are false and frivolous? insomuch that when they come to awake, they cannot persuade themselves that all these extravagant Visions were done in their Sleep, but verily believe them to be
real,

real, and are ready to think them mad or asleep, who offer to contradict or disbelieve them.

SINCE therefore these Images or Ideas which offer themselves to us in our Sleep, how evident soever they may then appear to us, are nevertheless very false; how shall we be sure that our waking Hours are not another Kind of Sleep, during which, our Ideas, how plain and evident soever they may appear to our Mind, are nevertheless as false as those we had in our Sleep? *Plato*, in his *Theatetes*, has rais'd this very Doubt, and they are very much mistaken who think they have found a certain Token to discover the Falshood of Dreams, *viz.* That they have no Relation to the Matters we have been doing when awake: For if they should happen to have any Relation to them, we shall have no Token left to distinguish the one from the other. Now such a Thing may easily happen. Suppose, for Instance, That in my Sleep, I dream that I am discoursing with my Friends about the same Things I had been telling them the Day before, and that the Barking of a Dog has interrupted my Story; the next Day when I come to awake, I shall be apt to question, whether the Barking of the Dog has interrupted the Story I was telling when I was awake, or that which I told in my Sleep; and it often happens, that we doubt whether some Things have really happen'd to us, or whether we only

only dream'd them; and if on the other Hand, our Dreams have no Relation to what we do when awake, why should we rather believe that those Things we dream'd of are falser than those we did when awake? For since there is such a Disagreement betwixt them, and that Disagreement is the Mark of Falshood, the one ought not to be more suspected of Falshood than the other.

It is agreed that the Consciousness of our Minds is form'd by the Impulse of the Brain, by the Motion of the Fibres and animal Spirits, as I have shew'd before. Whence it follows that the Evidence of those Images which present themselves to the Mind, being nothing else but a *Modus* or a Modification of those Images, must proceed from the same Cause with the Images themselves. This Point being once granted, as indeed it cannot be deny'd, we must likewise grant that the Brain may be shaken, and the Fibres and animal Spirits be mov'd in like manner by internal Causes, as well as by external Objects. Hence we may conclude, that the Evidence may be on the wrong as well as the right Side, and that the Evidence on the right Side carries no Marks whereby it may be known from that on the wrong Side. Neither can these Marks be taken from any Thing else, if it be true, as the Maintainers of Evidence affirm, That what is evident, is so of it self, and needs no Proofs from without.

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FOR if it were not so, we should never be able to discern one Evidence without the Help of another Evidence, as of an outward Light, to see the Light. Thus if a Man should carry several Coins in one Bag, all of Copper, except one which was of Silver, and some poor Beggars, who knew of it, should beg for these Pieces of Money, every one hoping that the Silver-piece should fall to his Share, and the Man, to whom the Bag and Money belongs, should distribute them in the Dark amongst them, none of the Beggars would be able to know whether he had receiv'd the Piece of Silver, or whether it has been taken out of the Bag, unless some of them guessing by the Sound, or the Feeling, or some other frivolous Token, comes to believe for certain, or find out by some infallible Tokens that he has it; otherwise it would be as ridiculous for him, as for the rest, to think that he had the Silver-piece, and that all the rest were mistaken; and such whimsical Disputes could be no way decided but by Day or Candle-Light.

IT is much the same with the Error of the *Dogmatists*, every one of whom, being surrounded with the greatest Darknesh, holds and feels his Copper Coin; there is not of them but boasts that he has by some infallible Tokens found that his Piece is the only precious one, *viz.* Truth, which he has receiv'd from God, the Giver of all Good, and chal-

challenges to himself a distinct and evident Perception of it, even clearer than the Light of the Sun at Noon-day, and is so fully persuaded that all the rest are in an Error, because they likewise think that they have the same identical Piece of Silver, that he will never own that the Evidence he so much boasted of, was but mere Darknes, till Light has been brought to him from another Place.



C H A P. X.

Proof ix. Containing, 1st. The Reasons propos'd by Des Cartes, for our doubting of every Thing; viz. That we don't know whether God has not created us of such a Nature, as that we shall be always mistaken. Whence it follows, 2d. That our internal Perception of Things is uncertain and doubtful.

Es Cartes furnishes us still with **D** another Reason for our doubting, when he says at the Beginning of his Meditations, (*Medit. 1. and 6. and of his Principles, & Princip. part 1. §. 5. and 13.*) that we don't know whether God has not created us of such a Nature, as that we shall be always deceiv'd; even in those Things

Things which appear to us most clear and evident. This Problem had been worthy of a Philosopher, had the Person who propounded it, taken the Pains of solving it; when I call it worthy of a Philosopher, I don't mean a Christian Philosopher, who knows that *God enlightens every man coming into the world*, Joh. i. 9. but here *Des Cartes* speaks as a Philosopher, and not as a Christian, and he that could suppose that there was no God, (*Des Cartes, Princ. Part 1. §. 7.*) could as well suppose that God had created Mankind subject to Error. But what surprizes me very much is, that he should so soon set up for a Discoverer of Truth; and that after he had begun his System of Philosophy by doubting, and given us his Reasons for so doing, he should, immediately after, so absolutely cease to doubt, (as if the Way to Truth had been shew'd him from Heaven) without so much as troubling himself about solving those very Arguments, which had induc'd him to doubt. But this is not a proper Place to treat of this Matter; it is sufficient to say, that this Doubt is of such Weight, that it must hinder us from receiving any Proposition as certain, whilst we make use of our Reason; and *Des Cartes* is so far from having overthrown it, that I cannot see how it can be even shaken, unless Faith comes to the Help of Reason. For if a Man is once persuaded that he is a Creature so fram'd by Nature, that what

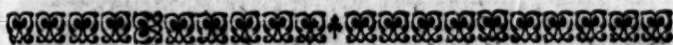
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appears

appears true to him, shall be false; whatever is propos'd to him against such a Notion, must appear to him either true or false; if false, he will justly reject it; if it appears to him to be true, he being naturally so fram'd, that what appears to him true is actually false, he will still be obliged to reject it as false; so that it will be easy for him to overturn all the Arguments that can be alledged against his Opinion, and it will be impossible to invent any but what will fall under this general Rule, that what appears truest to Man, is or may be falsest.

H O W E V E R, what I have been alledging above, and especially the Reason which *Des Cartes* has proposed for our doubting of every Thing, doth entirely overthrow and demolish the Fortress into which the *Dogmatists* use to intrench themselves, when they affirm that we have a certain intimate Knowledge of several Things, which, though not founded upon Reason, is nevertheless certain and evident: And that the Knowledge of the first Principles is of this Nature, as well as the Certainty I have, that I am now awake; and that although these Things cannot be proved by Reason, we have nevertheless an internal and sure Perception, that those Things are certainly so. For if Nature has form'd me in such a Manner, that what appears to me most true, shall be most false, when I think I know, and have a sensible and intimate Perception that the whole

is bigger than its Part, or that I am awake ; I shall be oblig'd to believe it false, if I stick closely to that Reason which *Des Cartes* has given us for doubting of every Thing.



C H A P. XI.

Proof x. *That it is a Petitio Principii, or begging of the Question, to prove by Reason that there is any Certainty in Reason.*



WE have still one Argument left, to prove the Weakness of Reason, which comes to the same Thing as the former, *viz.* That whatever Arguments we form in the Defence of Reason, are the Production of Reason ; but Reason can produce nothing that is entirely certain, therefore what Proofs soever I invent to maintain the Certainty of Reason, must be likewise uncertain. 'Tis therefore a *Petitio Principii*, a begging of the Question, to defend Reason by Arguments drawn from Reason ; For whatever Proofs we alledge as true and certain, being produced from Reason ; the Thing in question will still be whether Reason can produce any Thing that is true and certain, or not.





C H A P. XII.

Proof xi. *That our Reasonings are uncertain.*



WE must still harden our Foreheads, and since we have begun to doubt, we must do it in good Earnest, though we drive the *Dogmatists* to Despair. Sure it is, they can bring no Proof against me, but they must make use of Reasoning. I shall not here quote the Authority of several Philosophers, who look'd upon this Art of Reasoning as doubtful, uncertain and fallacious; and maintain'd that all the Rules of Logick were only mere Traps and Clogs, from which a Man could not extricate himself, and which made that appear true which was actually false, from which they concluded, that a Man must be out of his Senses to give Credit to that which so often deceives him. But I will endeavour to be more condescending. Let any of those Arguments be propounded to me, which our Adversaries hold for certain and indisputable, and I will presently shew you that it is very uncertain, and proves nothing. If they want to prove *v.g.* that *Peter* is a rational Creature, they will
reason

reason thus; Every Man is a rational Creature, *Peter* is a Man, *ergo* *Peter* is a rational Creature. The first of these three Propositions, which is universal, is taken for granted, because every particular Man is a rational Creature; for when we have once found that this Man, and that Man, and a Third, Fourth, &c. are rational Creatures, and that we never saw a Man that was not so; from the collected Heap of all those particular Propositions, which determine, that every Man in particular is a rational Creature, they have formed that universal Proposition that every Man is a rational Creature; whence it follows that the Certainty of this universal Proposition depends on the Certitude of all the particular ones.

BUT in the Reasoning we are now examining, the Certainty of the particular Proposition depends on the Certainty of the universal one, for from this, *viz.* that every Man is a rational Creature, we conclude that *Peter* is so too; and thus we fall into a vicious kind of Reasoning called a *Circle*, which the old Philosophers called a *Dyallalles*. Besides, since *Des Cartes* has maintain'd, that God can change the Essence of Things, and cause them not to be what they are, insomuch that the Number Forty shall not be compos'd of two Score, and that a Man shall not be a rational Creature, (I don't at present enquire into the Truth of those Propositions) it may so happen

that some Men may be found, which are not rational Creatures, and therefore that universal Proposition, that every Man is a rational Creature, shall hold no longer true.

THIS single Instance is sufficient to make us doubt of the Certainty of every Kind of Reasoning, and we have been induced to think so, by the many Arguments which some eminent Philosophers have furnished us with; however, I do but lightly touch upon these Matters. But upon the whole 'tis very plain, that if we act as becomes Wise-men, we shall take Care not to depend too much upon such Reasonings, as we have so often found the Falshood of. In this Disposition, if the *Dogmatists* should offer to attack me, what Weapons can they beat me with, whilst I keep my self intrench'd and cover'd with my Doubts and Diffidence? The best Arguments they can use are those which are call'd Demonstrations, for whatever Proof they bring, will be of no Force, unless it be reduced into Form of Argument and Reasoning: but what Reasoning or Argument is there, but what falls under that Law, I have propounded, of doubting of every Thing!





CHAP. XIII.

Proof xii. *That the Diffensions amongst the various Sects of Dogmatists, are a sufficient Reason against adhering to any.*

THE Diffensions amongst the Dogmatists, will likewise afford us a very pregnant Argument against themselves, which is the same that the Physicians called *Empiricks*, urged against those who join'd Reason to Experience, and were therefore called rational or reasoning Physicians; viz. That if nothing was ever affirm'd by one Man, but was deny'd by another; if there never was any Hypothesis or Doctrine advanc'd by some, but what has been contradicted by others; what Assurance can we have from their Affirmations, seeing other *Dogmatick* Philosophers equally conceited and arrogant, will not admit them to have any Weight?

LET us examine all their Sects, and ask every one of them, what they think of themselves, and of all the rest; and they will modestly answer, That they have Truth on their Sides, and that all the rest are mistaken. Ask another, what they think of this, and they will answer without Hesitation, that it

certainly is an erroneous one, and thus every one of them lays Claim to Truth; so that they only stand applauded by their own Sectaries, and condemn'd by all the rest; and can it be consistent with Prudence to follow a Sect or Party, which has no Commendation but its own, and is condemned by so many others.



C H A P. XIV.

Proof xliii. *That the Law of doubting has been established by many excellent Philosophers.* 1. By Anacharsis. 2. Pherecydes. 3. Pythagoras. 4. Empedocles. 5. Gorgias Leontinus. 6. Xenophanes. 7. Epicharmes. 8. Parmenides. 9. Xenia-
des. 10. Zeno Eleusis. 11. Heraclitus. 12. Anaxagoras. 13. Democritus. 14. Protagoras. 15. Socrates. 16. Plato, *Author of the first Academy.* 17. Aristotle. 18. Arcesilaus, *Author of the second Academy.* 19. Latices. 20. Carneades, *Author of the third Academy.* 21. Clitomachus. 22. Philo, *Author of the fourth Academy.* 23. Antiochus, *Author of the fifth Academy.* 24. Cicero. 25. Varro, Piso, Lucullus and Brutus. 26. *The Origin of Pyrrhonism.* 27. Metrodorus.

27. Metrodorus. 28. Anaxarchus. 29. Pyrrho. 30. *How many real Academies there have been, and the Difference between the Academy and Pyrrhonism.* 31. *That there have been but two Academies, the Ancient and the Modern, which last was a real Pyrrhonism.* 32. *Wherein the Difference between the new Academy, and the Sect of the Scepticks, is shewn, and reconciled. First Difference.* 33. *Second Difference.* 34. *Third Difference.* 35. *Fourth Difference.* 36. *Fifth Difference.* 37. *Sixth Difference.* 38. *Seventh Difference.* 39. *Why those Philosophers, who made Profession of doubting, chose rather to be called Academicks than Pyrrhonians.* 40. *It is false that the Sect of the Scepticks, or Pyrrhonians, was interrupted after Timon.* 41. Timon of Philus. 42. Nausiphanes of Teos. 43. Theodosius of Bithynia. 44. Aenesidemus of Cnossus. 45. Ptolomy of Alexandria. 46. Cornelius Celsus. 47. Favorinus. 48. Sextus Empiricus. 49. *Whether Sextus Empiricus is the same with Sextus of Chocronca.* 50. *The great Affinity between the Sceptick, the Empirick, and the Methodical Sects.* 51. Lucian. 52. Uranius. 53. *And furthermore, among the Sects of the Dogmatists, Porphyry.* 54. Aristippus, Ariston of Chios. 55. Herillus Carthaginensis. 56. Menedemus

Of the WEAKNESS of

mus of Eretria 57. *The Eretrick and
Megarick Philosophers.* 58. *Monimus
the Cynic.* 59. *Among strange Na-
tions, the Magi.* 60. *The Brachmans.*
61. *Certain Philosophers amongst the
Turks, called Astonished.* 62. *Among
the Jews the Essenians.* 63. *And the
Seboreans.* 64. *R. Moses, Ben Maimon.*
65. *And amongst the Arabians the Talk-
ers.*

*That the
Law of
doubting
has been
established
by excel-
lent Philo-
sophers.*

¶ E N of Sense and Learning having
discover'd with how great Dark-
ness our Minds are surrounded,
and with what profound Obscurity all
Things about us are cover'd; and observing
at the same time, that the principal Cause
of those Errors, into which Mankind is so
apt to fall, was their venturing to walk in
uneven, crooked and broken Paths, in the
midst of the thickest Darkness, with the
same Presumption and Precipitancy as if
they were walking in a smooth, plain Ground
at Noon-day; this made them stop, and
moderate this natural Propensity and Impe-
tuosity of the Mind: and after having
check'd, and, as it were, bridled their Minds,
they brought them to themselves again, and
disentangled them from their Prejudices.
They carefully examin'd the Nature of their
Bodies, of their Minds, and of every Thing
about and without them, and by thus ob-
serving

serving and trying all Things, they have been at last convinced that the only Way to prevent falling into Error, was to suspend their Belief. And sure it is, that this was the Origine of Philosophy, and that it owes its Birth to this Method of doubting, which the wisest Men took from their Observation of the Weakness of Human Understanding. There was then no other Difference between a Man of Sense and a Fool, between a Philosopher and a Dunce, but that the one knew that he knew Nothing, and the other knew it not.

IF therefore we take the Pains to trace the History of Philosophy, from its first Original to this present Time, amongst that great Diversity of Opinions, we shall find that those excellent great Men, who were the Authors of it, except some few of them, did all agree in this, That Truth is hidden from us, that our Understanding and Senses are weak and deceitful, and that our Minds are absolutely ignorant of every Thing.

I shall not place *Homer* at their Head, nor make use of his Authority as the *Scepticks* gladly do, whether in Conformity to the Custom of all Antiquity, which in all Controversies used to appeal to *Homer*; or because they knew that *Arcefilas* and *Pyrrho* had his Book continually in their Hands, and were ever reading of it. Neither shall I alledge the Authority of the seven Wise-men, who are pretended to have been the Found-

ers of this Law of doubting, because such precarious Authorities have more Ostentation than Truth.

Ana-
charsis.

1. I except however *Anacharsis*, who is said to have affirmed, That there was no Rule or *Criterion* of Truth, and that Man could comprehend Nothing; and who reproved those *Greeks* who were of a contrary Opinion.

Pherecy-
des.

2. As for *Pherecydes*, no Body can deny his being of this Opinion, since he has affirmed in his Writings that there was no Truth in any Thing, at least that he knew of none.

Pythago-
ras.

3. SUCH was likewise the Doctrine of *Pythagoras*, and in those Writings which are attributed to him, we find this excellent Maxim, that no Man ought to wish for any Thing, because he knows not what is best for him; and being fully convinc'd that Man could not, with all the Study and Application he was capable of, come to the Knowledge of Truth, he declar'd to *Leo*, Prince of the *Phliasians*, that he was Master of neither Knowledge nor Wisdom, but that God alone enjoy'd that Happiness; and that he boasted of nothing but his being a Lover of Wisdom, that is, a Philosopher.

Empedo-
cles.

4. *Empedocles*, *Pythagoras's* Disciple, made the best Use of this Lesson, and us'd often to complain that the Way of the Senses was too strait to lead us to Truth.

5. *Gorgias*

5. *Gorgias Leontinus*, Prince of those ^{Gorgias} who were heretofore call'd *Sophists*, being ^{Leont.} come out of the School of *Empedocles*, wrote a Book which he divided into three Parts. In the first, he shew'd that we cannot say that any Thing exists: In the second Part, he proved, that though it were true, that some Things exist, yet Man was not able to comprehend it, neither the Understanding, nor Senses, having any Rule of Truth: And in the third, he prov'd, that though it were possible for a Man to understand some Things, yet he could never make another sensible of what himself understood.

6. *Xenophanes*, who is reckoned a *Pythagorean*, did acknowledge that we under-^{Xenophanes} stand nothing certainly, that there is neither Rule of Truth, Understanding, nor Senses, that all depends on mere Fancy; and he maintain'd this Doctrine with so much Boldness and Pride, that he was believed to be the first Inventor of it, though he really was not.

7. *Epicharmes*, who was of the same Sect, affirmed, That true Wisdom did chiefly ^{Epicharmes} and wholly consist in our suspending our Judgment and Belief of Things.

8. *Parmenides*, whom *Plato* surnames the ^{Parmenides} Great, accus'd them of Rashness and Arrogance, who fancy'd they had attain'd to Knowledge, which he affirmed to be above our Reach.

Xeniades.

9. *Xeniades* of *Corinth* affirmed, That there was no Rule or *Criterion* of Truth, and that our Ideas, Notions, and all Things else were false. *Democritus* mentions this *Xeniades*, and therefore I can hardly believe, though I dare not deny it, that he was the same *Xeniades* also of *Corinth*, who had *Diogenes* for his Slave, and survived him; *Democritus* being older than *Diogenes*, who dy'd at the Age of ninety Years.

Zeno of Elea.

10. *Zeno* of *Elea* is famous among those who taught that we ought to suspend our Belief; he was the Author of the *Eleatick* Sect, which *Plato* doth attribute to *Xenophanes*, and even pretends that it is older than he, (*Platon. Sophist.*

Heraclitus.

11. *Heraclitus* maintain'd the very same Doctrine, as did also,

Anaxagoras.

12. *Anaxagoras*, who peremptorily affirm'd, That all Things are surrounded with Darkness.

Democritus.

13. *Democritus* taught that the Causes of Things were unknown, that there was nothing true, or that if any Thing were true, we could not know it; that he knew not whether he did know any Thing, or Nothing, or whether any Thing existed or no; he rejected all Kinds of Demonstration, and this Maxim especially is ascribed to him, that Truth lies hid in the Bottom of a Well.

Protagoras.

14. *Protagoras*, one of the Disciples of *Democritus*, and surnam'd *Wisdom*, did affirm that there was no Rule of Truth, that

no

nothing was either true or false; that there was a vast Difference betwixt Man and Man; that That, which appear'd to the one, did not appear to the other, and that nothing is more in this, than in that Manner; and being satisfy'd that there was nothing of which the same Thing might not be affirm'd and deny'd, and being uncertain whether one might argue *Pro* and *Con* of the same Thing, he was the first who settled that Method of maintaining the two contrary Opinions about the same Matter.

I s. *Socrates*, the famous Author of the *Socrates*. Art of Doubting, did afterwards take the same Method, and brought it into great Vogue; for having observed that Men knew nothing, and did not so much as know, that they knew nothing, he declared it openly, and profess'd that he knew nothing. This he thought made him deserve the Character given him by the *Delphick* Oracle, of being the wisest of Men; the highest Pitch of Wisdom consisting in the knowing and acknowledging our Ignorance.

A N D we may see by *Plato's* Dialogues, that he never would affirm any Thing, let the Subject propos'd to him be what it would, but that he contented himself with confuting those who had been bold enough to affirm any Thing; and this it was that induc'd his Adversaries to call him Fool and Ignorant, seeing he contented himself with asking Questions of others, without ever
answer-

answering any himself, and that he was always ready to own his Ignorance and Stupidity. He therefore gave himself up wholly to the Study of Moral Philosophy, and forsook that of Natural Philosophy, which he had cultivated at first, and found at length to be above the Reach of his Understanding. As to his own Particular, he found himself so insufficient for it, that though in the Beginning he fancied himself pretty expert in it, and was thought so by others, he became in the End blinded with it to that Degree, that he was forced to forget all that he had learn'd before, and profess'd such profound Ignorance, that he did not so much as know whether he was a Man or any Thing else, or in short what Thing he was.

SOME Men have thought that he was neither sincere nor in earnest, when he spoke after this Manner, but that he did it Ironically or through Modesty, and to humble the Arrogance of the *Sophists*, who foolishly bragg'd that they were ignorant of nothing, and that they were always ready to discourse on any Subject whatever. If that had been the Case, he would not have persisted so constantly in that publick and open Acknowledgement of his Ignorance, especially when he discoursed with his Friends, and with sober and serious Persons, and when there was no Room for his crying down and ridiculing the Philosophers. He would

would never have examin'd all Things, according to his wonted Custom, and conformably to this Doctrine, neither would he have given so false an Interpretation, and so contrary to his own Notions of the Oracle that had given such an ample Testimony of his Wisdom. From him have sprung several Sects of Philosophers, the most famous of which, afterwards called *Accademics*, have followed this wise Method of doubting of every Thing, and not only improv'd, but even carried it to its greatest Perfection.

16. *Plato*, the Father and Founder of the Academy, having been instructed by *Socrates* in the Art of doubting, and declaring himself his Follower, took his Method of handling Matters, and undertook to oppose all the Philosophers who had gone before him; and not only in those Writings of his, which are called *Gymnastick*, but even then when he seems to be most positive, whether he makes *Socrates* or any other to speak, he never advances any Thing for true, but propounds it only as probable, and keeps still to this Maxim, that the Knowledge of Truth must be left to the Gods, and the Children of the Gods, and that we ought to content our selves with seeking after that which is probable.

THE *Academicks*, who followed *Plato*, endeavour'd to settle this Philosophy, which till that Time had been loose and unsettled, and was already burden'd with the

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Knowledge of too many Things. They form'd Systems, Plans and Rules of Doctrine, and neglecting the Precepts of their Master *Socrates*, who never approv'd of such Ways, they settled some Laws both for teaching and learning, and had even the Boldness to advance some Doctrines.

Aristotle.

17. HOWEVER, *Aristotle* retain'd this uncertain and doubtful Manner of disputing upon every Subject, and was follow'd in it by the *Peripateticks*. Several Treatises are found amongst his Works, especially in his Metaphysical Books, which although they don't quite shut up the Way to Truth, yet they do not permit us to search after it, but by the Way of doubting, and after having first question'd and examin'd it: Nay, he has even ventur'd to say, that there is no Difference betwixt a firm Opinion and certain Knowledge; whence it follows that, all the Notions of Men being uncertain, all their Knowledge must be so too.

Arcefilas,
Author of
the second
Academy.

18. *Arcefilas* followed after, whom an ancient Author (*Pompon. Mel. Lib. i. Cap. 18.*) elegantly calls *the glorious Prince of the Academy, who affirms nothing*. He it was, who recall'd that Law of doubting of every Thing, which had been maintain'd by *Socrates*, but by this Time was almost come to nothing. He renew'd that ancient Custom of contradicting every Thing that was advanc'd in any Controversy, of maintaining that which was most probable, and of

never going beyond Likelihood and Probability. Nay, he carried it still further; for observing that against the Maxim of *Socrates*, viz. *I know nothing else, except that I know nothing*, this important Objection might be made; that Man must consequently know something, if he knows that he knows nothing; he would not so much as admit of this Maxim which *Socrates* had left behind him, to be a Kind of Comfort to human Weakness; and affirmed, that we did not so much as know that we knew nothing, that there was nothing sure; that Nature had not given us any Rule of Truth; that the Senses and Understanding of Man can apprehend nothing as true; that in every Thing we might find some Reasons of equal Force to the contrary; that one Thing was neither more true, nor even more likely than another; that every Thing was wrapt up in Darkness, and that we ought not therefore to approve or affirm any Thing, but always suspend our Assent and Belief; so that he never would declare his Sentiments, being even unwilling to admit that Men had any Sentiments at all; and if any Man did declare or maintain his own, he oppos'd it with great Pleasantness and good Manners, as well as with a great deal of Wit and Learning.

BUT after all, this same Person, who, in all Philosophical Disputes, would never agree that one Thing was truer than another,

when he return'd to the common Uses of Life, would always prefer that which appear'd most probable to him; and yet so great was his Modesty; that in the Practice and Defence of this Method of disputing, he could not bear to be call'd the Author or Inventor of it, but would always ascribe it to *Socrates*, to *Plato*, to *Parmenides* and *Heracitus*: He was nevertheless drawn into this Party by *Pyrrho*, and wholly adher'd to him, after he had left *Theophrastus*, *Crantor*, *Diodorus* and *Menedemus*.

He was therefore actually a *Pyrrhonian*, and the *Pyrrhonians* have put him in the Number of the *Scepticks* and *Pyrrhonians*, tho' he never rejected the Title of *Academick*. We must therefore look upon him, not only as the Restorer, but likewise as the Reformer of the Doctrine of *Socrates* and of the old Academy: For 'twas he, who gave Birth to the new Academy, which is founded on more solid Principles than the old one. Nevertheless, though he had many Disciples, yet his Doctrine was not presently relish'd, because it look'd as if he had design'd to extinguish all the Light of Knowledge, to over-cast the Mind with Darkness, and overturn the Foundations of Philosophy.

Lacydes.

19. *Lacydes* was the only one, who maintain'd the Doctrine of *Arcefilas*: He transmitted it to *Evander*, who was one of his Disciples; *Evander* transmitted it to *Hegesimus*, and he to *Carneades*.

20. *Carneades*

20. *Carneades* did not however follow the *Carneades*,
 Doctrine of *Arcefilas* in every Particular, *Author of*
 though he retain'd the Chief and Sum of it, *the third*
 in general. This caus'd him to be called the *Academy*.
 Author of a new, called the third Academy.
 He oppos'd with a great deal of Wit and
 Eloquence all the Opinions that were pro-
 pounded to him, without ever discovering his
 own. For besides his great Application to
 the Study of Philosophy, he had a wonderful
 Strength of Wit, an excellent Memory, a
 fluent Tongue, a fine Elocution, and a long
 Use of Logick: His School was therefore
 very much resorted, and when the *Atheni-*
ans deputed him to the Senate of *Rome*,
 about Matters of great Consequence, and
Critolaus a *Peripatetick*, and *Diogenes* a
 Stoick Philosopher were his Colleagues, he
 was very favourably receiv'd by the *Romans*.

It was then that the Force of Eloquence,
 and the Worth of Philosophy began to be
 known at *Rome*, and their flourishing Youth,
 who then began to aim at the Empire of the
 World, attracted by the Novelty and Ex-
 cellence of so noble a Science, as that which
Carneades profess'd, did resort to him with
 such Eagerness, that *Cato*, otherwise a Man
 of sound Judgment, but of a Disposition a
 little too savage and crabbed, as wanting that
 Politeness which is the Effect of Learning and
 Literature, and being a Stranger to the Civi-
 lity and Courtesy of the *Romans* of his
 Time; began to suspect this new Kind of

Philosophy, which could so easily obtain whatever it desir'd; and advis'd the Senate to grant those Deputies what they asked, and then that they should be speedily and honourably dismiss'd.

It is true, *Carneades* over-turn'd by his Arguments whatever he had undertook to oppose, and remain'd invincible in the Opinions he maintain'd, insomuch that the Stoicks, a Sort of People very contentious and crafty in their Disputes, with whom both he and *Arcefilas* had very frequent Contests, could hardly defend themselves against him; he adher'd, as I said before, wholly to the Doctrine of *Arcefilas*, few Points only excepted, about which he could not agree with him; such as about the Rule of Truth, about the Incomprehensibility and Uncertainty of Things, and the suspending our Belief.

He allerdg'd several new Proofs of this, which amounted to thus much, *viz.* That there was no certain Rule of Knowledge; that we can comprehend Nothing; that in all Things we ought to follow Probability; that all Laws and Customs were establish'd by Men's Opinions, and by Nature; that Men liv'd in such profound Ignorance of the Truth, and were so much in the Dark concerning every Thing, that they did not even receive those Principles by which the Light of Nature seems to manifest the Truth to us, as for Instance, that two Things, which are equal to a Third, are equal amongst themselves.

selves. The Stoicks, willing to lessen his Reputation affirm'd, That he alledg'd nothing against them of his own, but that he had taken all these Objections out of the Books of the Stoick *Chrysippus*; and so modest was he, that he would own it, affirming that he could not have done any Thing without *Chrysippus's* Books, and that he fought *Chrysippus*, with his own Weapons.

It is true, *Chrysippus* willing to oppose this Law of doubting, and this Suspension of the *Academicks*, had collected all the Proofs, not only which he was wont to use in his own Defence, but likewise all those he might at any Time make use of; but when the Question was about overthrowing those Proofs, and that he had forgot nothing that could lessen the Force of them, 'twas then that he easily discover'd how superior the Cause of the *Academicks* was to that of the Stoicks; since the avow'd Enemy of the *Academicks* had appear'd stronger when arm'd with their Arguments, than when he had undertook to confute them, so that *Chrysippus* hurted himself by his own Strength, and furnished *Carneades* with Weapons against himself.

21. *Carneades* did long enjoy this Glory, Clitomachus. and very great Men became his Disciples; amongst which was *Clitomachus*, a *Carthaginian*, who was already Master of the Philosophy of his own Country, but was instructed in the *Greek* Philosophy by *Carneades*,

and help'd him to establish the third Academy, and at last succeeded him. He was a Man of bright Parts, very studious and diligent, and having liv'd a pretty while with *Carneades*, who had never writ any Thing, he had taken care to collect all his Discourses, Actions and Thoughts, though there were some particular Points concerning which he never could discover *Carneades's* Sentiments.

SUCH was the Effect of the long Habit, which *Carneades* had taken, of affirming nothing even amongst his most familiar Friends. Besides, there was no Difference at all in their Opinions, for *Clitomachus* did likewise affirm, That we ought to suspend our Belief, because we can comprehend nothing: That in the Conduct of our Lives, we ought only to regard the most probable Things, but not to give our Assent or Belief to them; there being many Things which, though they seem probable, are nevertheless false, or at least without any Mark of Truth, but what may as well be found in Things that are actually false; he did not teach this Doctrine as his own, but as that of the Academy, and had written four Books to prove the Necessity of suspending our Belief. I could wish they had been extant to this Day.

Philo,

Author of
the fourth
Academy.

22. *Philo* was *Clitomachus's* Disciple, who because he departed from the Doctrine of *Carneades* and *Clitomachus*, in some Points,

Points, deserv'd to be call'd together with *Charmides*, Author of the fourth Academy. For he affirm'd that Things were indeed comprehensible of themselves, but that we were not able to comprehend them, by the Help of that Faculty which Nature had given us to comprehend those Objects, which offer themselves to our Minds; and that consequently we could comprehend nothing.

23. *Antiochus* was the Founder of the Antiochus, Author of the fifth Academy. fifth Academy; he had been many Years *Philo's* Disciple, and had maintain'd the Doctrine of *Carneades*; for he had a quick and polite Wit, but towards the latter End of his Life he forsook the Party of his Master, whether he were induced to it by the Persuasions of the Stoick *Mnesarcus*, or because he could no longer defend himself against the continual Persecutions of the *Dogmatists*, or because he was thereto allur'd by the secret Vanity of being Author of a new Sect, and having his Disciples call'd by his Name. However, he did boast that he was gone back to the ancient Academy, though he was indeed gone over to the Sect of the Stoicks; but he endeavour'd to wipe off the Stain and Imputation of Fickleness, and was so thoroughly persuaded that the Name of *Academick* would be an Honour to him, that he was willing to make all the rest believe that he was come from them.

AND

AND thus he brought into the Academy the Doctrines of the Stoicks, which he attributed to *Plato*, affirming them to be no new Doctrines, but only a Reformation of the ancient Academy; and even publish'd a Book against his Master *Philo*, or rather against himself. For that very Doctrine, which he oppos'd in his old Age, he both taught a long Time, and maintain'd by his learned Writings; and by that very Thing he still more confirm'd the Doctrine of the new Academy, which he endeavour'd to confute; shewing thereby both his own Inconstancy, and at the same Time, how little Certainty and Dependence there is on Mens Judgments in our Search after Truth, and how far Men are from ever certainly knowing whether they can know any Thing or not. This fifth Academy therefore is nothing else but a Mixture of the old Academy, and the Stoick Philosophy, or rather the very Philosophy of the Stoicks, under the Habit and Titles of the old Academy, I mean that which flourish'd between the Times of *Plato* and *Arcefilas*: for the Stoicks had forsaken the Law of doubting, as *Antiochus* had done, whose Doctrines have been preserv'd, and which we may plainly see, were neither those of *Plato*, nor of *Socrates*.

Cicero.

24. THIS *Philo*, I spoke of, being oblig'd to leave *Athens*, in the Times of the *Pontic* War, retir'd to *Rome*, where *Cicero* became his Disciple, whom he exactly instructed in the

the whole System of the new Academy, after which, *Cicero*, being come to *Athens*, was taught, during six Months, the Precepts of the old Academy by *Antiochus*, and even when he was entrusted by the Commonwealth with the greatest Places of Honour and Trust, he did not forsake the Study of Philosophy; but on the contrary, his House became the Refuge and Receptacle of the greatest Philosophers of his Time.

HE continued his Application and Fondness to the Doctrine of the old Academy a long Time, after he had been thoroughly instructed in it by *Antiochus*; but being at length grown wiser by continual Reflexions, Study and the Knowledge of the World, he return'd to *Philo's* Philosophy, and the very Reverse besel him to what had happen'd to *Antiochus*, who forsook the new Academy, to return to the old one; for *Cicero* went from the old to the new, which he explain'd and maintain'd by his incomparable Writings; and made use of the Liberty allow'd by that Sect, with so little Restraint, that he made no Scruple to change his Mind, upon several Occasions, affirming openly that he was free, that he liv'd only from Hand to Mouth, and follow'd that which appear'd most probable to him. He often openly commended this Method of reasoning of the Academy as a modest, easy, polite and constant one; and was never afraid to declare that there

Varro,
Piso, Lu-
cullus and
Brutus.

there was nothing so extravagant, but had been affirm'd by some Philosopher or other.

25. *Varro* express'd himself still more boldly, and affirm'd that nothing can come into the Brain of a mad or light-headed Man, so strange and extravagant, but some Philosophers have dar'd to affirm it. This Person, who was one of the most learned among the *Romans*, had imbib'd the Precepts of *Antiochus*; and I don't doubt but that in the Satyre which he call'd *Eumenides*, in which he undertook to prove all Mankind mad; he had collected several Arguments to prove that Human Understanding could have no Knowledge of the Truth.

Piso and several others had receiv'd some Lessons from *Antiochus*, but especially *Lucullus*, so famous for the great Things he had perform'd by his Eloquence, by his Wit and Learning. When he was made Questor, and afterwards General of the Army, he would always have *Antiochus* with him, and it was by this Means that he became so zealous a Partisan for the old Academy, as by the Means of *Aristus*, *Antiochus*'s Brother, *Brutus*, a Man of great Merit, was brought over to the same Sect; and both these, and all the other Disciples of *Antiochus*; did confine themselves within the Limits of that old Academy. The Study of Philosophy did then flourish at *Rome*, whilst the Academy was almost forsaken even in *Greece*, which being oppress'd by the Arms

Arms of the *Romans*, and continually troubled with foreign and intestine Wars, was more solicitous about its Safety, than about the Search of Truth.

26. NOW this Art of correctly doubting, *The Origin of Pyrronism.* which not only professes its own Ignorance, but owns it self likewise ignorant of that Ignorance, had made some great Progress before *Arcefilas*.

27. FOR *Metrodorus* of *Chio*, who had been brought up in the School of *Demo-*
critus, or, as some pretend, in that of *Nassa*, *Metrodorus.* who was of the same Island, and had been instructed by *Protagoras*, *Democritus's* Disciple, wrote this Maxim in the Front of his Work, *de Natura.* *None of us knows any Thing; we don't so much as know whether we know any Thing or Nothing;* upon which Account it was said, that he had quite taken away all *Criterion* or Rule of Truth.

28. *Anaxarchus* did the very same; he was a Native of *Abdera*, and maintain'd the Doctrine of *Democritus*; and for his Constancy and Resolution, as well as his Affability and condescending Temper, was firnam'd *Eudæmonicus.* *Anaxarchus.* This brought him into great Esteem with *Alexander*, whom he accompanied: He took away, as I hinted before, all Rule of Truth, affirming that we could not, by the Help of our Understanding, comprehend any Thing any other Way, but as drunken Men or Men asleep do; that Things
present

present themselves to our Minds, in the same Manner, as a Picture, which shews only the Likeness of Things, but not the Things themselves; and in a Word, that he knew nothing, and that he did not even know that he knew nothing; all which he had learn'd from his Master *Metrodorus*.

Pyrrho.

29. THE Art of doubting was then in its Perfection, and Human Understanding was convinc'd of its Weakness, when *Pyrrho*, a Native of the City of *Elides*, gave it the finishing Stroke: For after he had read the Writings of *Democritus* and *Metrodorus*, he follow'd *Anaxarchus* into *India*, and had several Conferences with the *Magi* and the *Gymnosophists*; and being return'd into his own Country, he set forth a more perfect Kind of Incomprehensibility, call'd by the *Greeks*, *Acatalepsy*. For having with great Penetration observ'd that the Ancients, after they had own'd their Ignorance, and even their Ignorance of that Ignorance, did nevertheless observe a certain Method of reasoning, which seem'd to admit of the Knowledge of some Things as certain, and that they made use of some Affirmations, he gave it quite a new Form, and put it entirely out of the Power of the *Dogmatists* to lay hold on it in their Disputes. 'Tis true, he has left nothing of it in Writing, but he has had Disciples, and these have had others, who have taken care to publish this Doctrine in some of their Works, some few of

of which are still extant, and have preserv'd it whole and entire.

FOR this Reason we cannot give a more particular Account of it than this; that the *Pyrrhonians* never admitted of any Rule of Truth, or any Reasoning, nor of any Mark whereby Truth might be known; that they never affirm'd, defin'd, nor judg'd of any Thing; that they did not believe that any Thing was one Thing rather than another; that what new Arguments were alledg'd on one Side, they still brought others of equal Force and Weight to prove the contrary; that they did not prefer one Argument before another; that they maintain'd that there was nothing true; that every Thing was done through Custom; and that even then when they advanc'd all these Propositions, they did not affirm them, but did it only out of a Spirit of Contradiction. For *Pyrrho* did oppose all the Doctrines of the other Sects, and when he affirm'd that they were all to be reject'd, he was far from exempting his own Notions out of that Law; for he never pretended that they were either surer or more allowable than the rest; and when he affirm'd that we could comprehend nothing, he did not pretend to comprehend even that, which in his Opinion was equally incomprehensible; and therefore out of his universal Proposition, that nothing can be known, he did not even except that very Proposition, but compar'd it to a Dose of Physick,

Physick, which not only carries off all peccant Humours, but doth likewise drive it self out of our Bodies along with them. Nevertheless, as he ceas'd to hope for the Knowledge of Truth, he kept to the Appearance of Things, which he would have us to admit, instead of a *Criterion*, or Rule of Truth, in the Affairs of Life; and that we should follow the Laws, Customs and Sentiments of Nature, but without forming any Judgment or Opinion from them.

By this Means he attain'd to that Peace and Tranquility of Mind, which he had been seeking for, and had hop'd to find in the Study of Nature; and because those Sensations, which come to us from without, and which we call *Evils*, such as Cold, Hunger, Thirst, and the like, do no Ways depend on our Opinion of them, he only did what was in his Power to avoid them, without venturing to determine whether they were really Evils, and this made him to bear them with greater Moderation; and it was by this that he came to deserve those Praises that were given him, of being endow'd with the greatest Constancy, in the Midst of the greatest Dangers. However, he was far enough from being such as some have been pleas'd to represent him, *viz.* That he never shunn'd any Dangers; that if a Cart or a Precipice came in his Way, he would not turn out of it; that he would not so much as frighten a Dog away, that came

to bite him ; that he shunn'd the Company of Men, and either wander'd by himself, or stood stock-still in the same Place and Posture.

ALL these were devis'd on purpose to ridicule him, by Persons of no Integrity, and unacquainted with his Doctrine, for he was, on the contrary, in great Esteem amongst his Fellow - Citizens, who conferr'd on him the High - Priesthood of his Country, honour'd him to a very high Degree, and, for his Sake, granted to all Philosophers an Immunity from all publick Offices, and the *Athenians* made him free of their City : He is even reported to have receiv'd a Present of Ten Thousand Crowns of Gold, from *Alexander* the Great, the first Time he was admitted to his Presence, whether to salute him, or to present him with a Poem which he had compos'd in Honour of him.

Epicurus was a great Admirer of him, and often enquir'd after his Behaviour and his Manner of Living. 'Tis true indeed, that he call'd him an Ignoramus, but what Philosopher did ever escape *Epicurus's* Obloquies, who did not even spare *Democritus*, from whose Writings he receiv'd all his Philosophy ; nor *Nausiphanes* of *Teos*, who had been both his Master and a Disciple of *Pyrrho* ? it ill became him to tax *Pyrrho* of Ignorance, when himself was both ignorant and illiterate. Nay, he was even wont to insult those who apply'd themselves to any

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Literature,

Literature, under Pretence that Learning contributed nothing to the Attainment of Wisdom, but indeed to hide his own Ignorance by his seeming Contempt of it.

BUT if *Pyrrho* was esteem'd ignorant, 'twas not so much because he was really so, as (*Cicero, Lib. iii. de finib.*) plainly shews, and every Body cannot but own; as because, according to the System of his Philosophy, he profess'd that he knew nothing; though 'tis certain that many great and learned Men have come out of his School: Others did likewise treat him with great Indignity, but it was more out of Hatred to the Doctrine, than to the Teacher.

HE was nevertheless in great Esteem among the People. His Disciples, who were very numerous, extoll'd him to the Skies, especially *Timon* of *Phlius*, who highly commends his Wit, his Subtlety and Penetration in Disputing, his Modesty and his Constancy through all the Accidents of his Life: He calls him a Sun, and thinks that no Man was ever worthy to be compar'd to him. He it was, according to *Pocock's* Conjecture, whom the *Arabians* call'd *Phurun*, and whom, through, Ignorance of the *Greek* History, they believe to have been the Disciple of *Thales*, and *Pythagoras*, as if the Doctrine of *Pyrrho* had comprehended all the Philosophy of the *Greeks*, which was divided into two Sects, the *Ionick* and the *Italick*.

THE Followers of *Pyrrho* were call'd after his Name, *Pyrrhonians*; they were likewise call'd *Scepticks*, because they consider'd and examin'd the Weight of the Proofs that were alledg'd for and against any Matter; they were also call'd *Zereticks*, because they apply'd themselves to the Search of Truth. Lastly, They had the Name of *Aporeticks* given them, because they made Profession of doubting of every Thing.

It was upon their Precepts that *Arcefilas* undertook to reform the old Academy, and to form the new one. For he is reported to have imitated *Pyrrho*, and to have been conversant with *Timon*, insomuch that having enrich'd the *Epoch*, that is, the Art of doubting of *Pyrrho*, with *Plato's* eloquent Eru- dition, and arm'd it with *Diodorus's* Logick, *Aristotle* did pleasantly apply to him that Verse of *Homer's* Chimera, which was a Lion before, a Dragon behind, and a Chi- mera or Goat in the middle: So *Arcefilas* was according to him, a *Plato* before, a *Pyrrho* behind, and a *Diodorus* in the middle. For this Reason he is reckon'd by some a- mong the *Scepticks*, and *Sextus Empiricus* maintains, that there is little or no Diffe- rence between his own Sect, which is that of the *Scepticks*; and the Sect of *Arcefilas*, which is that of the middle Academy.

36. THO' it is sufficient for our present Purpose to have demonstrated, as I have done, and am still continuing to do, that the most

How many Academies there have really been, and what was the Difference between the Academy and Pyrrhonism.

Of the Weakness of

famous Philosophers of Antiquity have acknowledged the Weakness of Human Understanding; however, I shall not think it lost Labour to shew wherein the new Academy differ'd from the old, and wherein both the one and the other differ'd from *Pyrrhonism*. Some have pretended that there never was but one Academy, and *Philo*, who was the Author of the fourth Academy, wrote a Book to prove it; *Plutarch* likewise wrote another to the same Purpose.

THIS will be found true, if, setting aside their Contests, we only regard that first Principle maintain'd by *Socrates*, that Man knows nothing; for as the several Branches that spring from the same Trunk, and spread themselves different Ways, are not so many different Trees; so likewise all these Sects which have sprung from that one Trunk of *Socrates's* Doctrine, though divided into several Schools, are nevertheless but one Academy. However, if we examine this Matter more narrowly, we shall find such Difference between the old and the new, that we shall be forced to acknowledge two Academies. For when *Socrates* affirm'd, that he knew but one Thing, *viz.* that he knew nothing, he own'd that he knew something, and consequently believ'd that Man might know something with Certainty.

Arcefilas

Arcefilas, on the contrary, has own'd even this to be uncertain, and in this consists a capital and invincible Difference; one Side believing with *Socrates*, that Man may know something, and the other maintaining with *Arcefilas* that Man can know nothing. As for the Corrective which was afterwards brought by *Carneades* and *Philo*, it ought not to be esteem'd of any Weight, for it is an easy Matter to reconcile what was said by *Arcefilas*, viz. that there is no Truth to be found in any Thing; with what was affirm'd by *Carneades*, who did not deny but that there might be some Truth in Things, but that we had no Rule to discover it. For there are two Sorts of Truth, according to the Schools Distinction, the one which is call'd *Truth of Existence*, the other call'd *Truth of Judgment*. Now it is plain, that those two Propositions of *Arcefilas* and *Carneades* relate to the *Truth of Judgment*; for how could Men, who maintain'd that we can neither know nor affirm any Thing, believe that they could know or affirm something concerning the *Truth of Existence*, that is, that any Thing exists? But *Truth of Judgment* is of the Number of relative Things, which ought not to be consider'd separately and by themselves, but as having some Relation with other Things; for it has a Relation to our Minds. When therefore *Arcefilas* has affirm'd that there is no Truth in any Thing, he only meant that

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that there is nothing in any Thing, that may be with any Certainty known by Human Understanding; which is the very same Thing that *Carneades* maintain'd.

BESIDES, *Arcefilas* affirm'd, that nothing could be understood; and that every Thing was obscure; (for the Term *obscure*, which he us'd, did much better express the Greek *αδυνα*, than the Word uncertain which *Cicero* made use of.) *Carneades* agreed that nothing could be thoroughly understood, but he would not therefore own that every Thing was obscure; for those probable Things, to which he would have a Wiseman adhere, are not obscure; but though there may be some Difference in the Expression, there is none really in the Thing. For *Arcefilas* affirm'd, that Things were so obscure, that they could not be understood; but not so obscure as not to be probable or improbable. This was *Carneades's* Opinion; for he did not deny but that every Thing was so obscure, that it could not be understood; but he only deny'd it to be so obscure, as that we might not be able to discover those Things which were to be preferr'd in the common Uses of Life, from those which were to be rejected: From which it follows, that there was no Difference in their Opinions; whilst *Carneades* did permit a Wiseman to hold some Opinions, and even perhaps to give his Assent sometimes; whereas *Arcefilas* forbade both. *Carneades* did

did only pretend that a Wiseman ought to choose probable Things in the common Uses of Life, without which it would be impossible to live, but not in the Conduct of our Understanding, and in the Search of Truth, from which alone *Carneades* banish'd Opinion and Consent.

NEITHER was there any great Difference between their Doctrines, and that of *Pyrrho*; for when he affirm'd that it was the Weakness of our Understandings, and not the Nature of Things, which hinder'd our Comprehension of them; it was that very Thing about which *Arcesilas* and *Carneades* disagreed, the former maintaining that there was no Truth in any Thing, and the latter owning that there was indeed some Truth in Things, but affirming at the same Time that we were not able to comprehend it; which though it differs in the Terms, yet is really the same Thing. For to affirm that there is no Truth in any Thing, and that the Truth of Things cannot naturally be comprehended by us, are relative Propositions, which relate to the Understanding of Man, and mean no more than this, *viz.* That the Nature of Things is not that which hinders us from comprehending them, but the Weakness and Obscurity of our Understanding.

Philo did likewise agree with *Carneades*, that a Wiseman might hold some Opinions, but when he affirm'd that he could also comprehend some Things, though not so

surely but that there remain'd still some Room for doubting, he seems to have abus'd the Term *comprehend*, for if in Comprehension there be any Reason for doubting, it is no longer Comprehension but Opinion: So that he came into *Carneades's* Sentiments, and agreed that we ought to follow Probability in the Concerns and Conduct of our Lives. But as for the fifth Academy, which was that of *Antiochus*, it was wholly *dogmatical*, for it was nothing else but the old Academy, in a Stoick Dress, and so has nothing to do with this Dissertation.

There have
been but
two Aca-
demies, the
old and the
new, and
the new
was a very
Pyrrho-
nism.

31. WE must therefore agree, that there were properly but two Academies, the old which was that of *Socrates* and *Antiochus*; and the new which was that of *Arcefilas*, *Carneades* and *Philo*, and I affirm, that this last was nothing else but the Philosophy of *Pyrrho*; for though there are some Points alledg'd, about which they seem to differ, yet they are not so considerable as to make two Sects of them, since the old and new Academy, though they differ in more essential Points, have nevertheless retain'd the Name of Academy. Nay, we do even see, that though the Doctrine of *Aristotle* has spread it self so far, that an infinite Multitude of Sects have sprung from it, so different in their Doctrines and Opinions, that they even call one another mad Men, they nevertheless retain the Name of *Peripateticks* and *Aristotelians*.

IT is an old Question, as we may learn from *Aulus Gellius*, (*A. Gell. Lib. ii. cap. 5.*) and very much disputed by several Greek Authors, *viz.* wherein the *Pyrrhonians* differ'd from the *Academicks*. *Plutarch* wrote a Book on this Subject, but since Time has depriv'd us of that Assistance, which we might have had from Antiquity, let us follow *Sextus Empiricus*, who has given us so exact an Account of all the material Points of that Difference, that nothing can be added to it.

32. THE first Head of the Difference, The Difference, between the new Academy and the Sect of the Scepticks, related and reconciled. between the new Academy and the Doctrine of the *Scepticks* he mentions, consists in this, that they both affirming, that Human Understanding can comprehend nothing, the *Academicks* speak it affirmatively, whereas the *Scepticks* advance it only doubtfully; but this Difference is very inconsiderable, and *Sextus* doth mention it with some Doubt. For how can a Man, who believes that we can know nothing, and that we do not even know whether we can know any Thing; himself affirm any Thing? For whoever affirms any Thing, declares thereby that he knows what he affirms.

33. THE second Head of this Difference, Second Difference. mention'd by *Sextus*, seems to be of more Importance, tho' indeed it be but trivial, and only consists in the Use of the Term, but not at all in the Thing; they both agree that there are some Things which are good, and

and some which are evil; but when the *Academicks* do say it, they maintain at the same Time that they are persuaded that it's more probable, that what they find to be good should be really so, than that it should not; and the like they say of that which is evil. Whereas when the *Scepticks* say, that any Thing is either good or evil, they do not therefore pretend that they are persuaded that what they say is more probable than the contrary; they only pretend to follow the common Uses of Life, without Opinion or Persuasion.

ALL the Difference therefore consists in this Opinion, which the *Academicks* confess they have, and the *Scepticks* disown; but when these last do choose any Thing as good in the common Uses of Life, and prefer it to another, they are thereto led by some Appearance of Goodness which they find in that Thing, and not in another. They must therefore have some strong and remarkable Idea imprinted in their Mind by that Image or Appearance of Goodness, which is found in one Thing, and not in another; and it is by this Idea that they conduct their Choice to that Thing from which the Idea proceeded: But the *Academicks* are also conducted by the like Idea to the Choice of a Thing that appears good to them; and therefore all the Difference consists in this, that both the one and the other being led by an Idea imprinted in their

their Mind by that Appearance of Goodness, the *Academicks* do pursue it, and the *Scepticks* suffer themselves to be led to it; and that the former do call it an Opinion or Persuasion, and the *Scepticks* do not, tho' neither the one nor the other affirm the Thing from which that Appearance or Image of Goodness proceeds to be good; but only they both affirm that the Thing, which they have chosen, doth seem good to them, and that they have that Idea imprinted in their Mind, to which they suffer'd themselves to be led; these latter do not even deny but that they have some Persuasion, but they make some Difference betwixt their Kind of Persuasion, and that of the *Academicks*, as I shall shew by and by.

34. THE third Difference comes to the same Thing. The *Academicks* maintain that some of their Ideas are probable, and others are not, and that amongst them which are probable, some are more so than others; the *Scepticks* pretend that they are equal with respect to the Credit we give to them. But *Sextus*, who mentions this Difference, doth himself furnish us with the Means to remove it; for he says that the *Scepticks* will have that Credit, we give to Ideas, to be equal with respect to Reason, that is, so far as they have any Relation to the Knowledge of Truth, and the Attainment of Knowledge by the Help of Reason; for the clearest Idea has no more Power to bring me to the Knowledge

Knowledge of Truth, than the darkeſt; but in what concerns the common Offices of Life, they would have us prefer the clear Idea to that which is obſcure; and in this reſpect *Arceſilas* neither ſpoke nor meant otherwiſe than the *Scepticks* do.

*Fourth Dif-
ference.*

35. THE fourth Difference doth not conſiſt in the Thing, but in the Manner of it; for both Sides own that they are attracted by ſome Object, but the *Academicks* pretend that this Attraction is cauſ'd in them with ſome vehement Propenſity, which the *Scepticks* deny; as if the one were carried towards a probable Thing, and the others only ſuffer'd themſelves to be led to it, without any Credit or Conſent being given to it by either Side.

*Fifth Dif-
ference.*

36. *Sextus Empiricus* mentions another Difference between them, which conſiſts in the Things that have a Relation to the End. He ſays that the *Academicks* follow Probability in the common Uſes of Life, whereas the *Scepticks* obey the Laws, Customs and Inclinations of Nature. In this, as well as in other Things, their Language is different, tho' their Notions are not, for theſe latter obey the Laws, Customs and Affections, becauſe it appears good to them ſo to do, that is, to follow the Idea which is imprinted in their Minds, by the Image or Appearance of Goodneſs, which is found in the Affections, Laws and Customs. Now the following that imprinted Idea is what the *Academicks* call

call approving, or holding an Opinion; and that Appearance of Goodness, from which this Idea proceeded, is what they call Probability.

So that when the *Academist* obeys the Laws, he pretends to do it because he is of Opinion that it is good so to do, and that this is probable; but when the *Sceptick* doth the same Thing, he doth not make use of the Terms Probability or Opinion, for fear it should lead him to give Credit to it. In like manner the End of the *Scepticks* and of *Arcefilas*, being the *Epoch*, that is, the Suspension of our Belief, and its Companion being *Ataraxy*, that is, Imperturbability, it is necessary that it should appear good to both Sides, as it actually did; for both he and they agreed, that particular *Epochs* were a Good, and that particular Assents and Consents were Evils; so that it is necessary that both Sides should shun the one, and pursue the other. But to pursue a Thing as a Good, whether you call it Approbation, Opinion, or what other Name you please to give it, the Thing is still the same without any Difference.

37. ANOTHER Difference which *Sextus* Sixth Difference. mentions, between *Arcefilas* and the *Scepticks*, is, that when both he and they call the *Epoch*, or Suspension of our Belief a Good, and our Belief or Consent an Evil; the *Scepticks* do not affirm it, but only say that it appears so to them: whereas *Arcefilas* believes

lieves it to be really such as he affirms it to be; and that it is so of its own Nature; but *Sextus* doth attribute this Sentiment to him with some Doubt, and by Way of Conjecture, and *Aulus Gellius* doth positively affirm the contrary (*Lib. ii. cap. 5.*) for he writes that the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* did maintain that our Ideas are form'd from external Objects, not according to the Nature of those Objects, but according to the Disposition of the Bodies and Minds of those who conceive those Ideas.

BESIDES, the Goodness of the End is of the Number of relative Things, as we said before, when we spoke of the Truth of Things. Now the Goodness of the End relates to us, and there can be no other Reason to induce us to say that the End is good, but because it appears so to us. It follows therefore that *Arcefilas* did not think of the Goodness of the End, otherwise than the *Scepticks* did: For can we think that he could believe that Things had of their own Nature any Goodness, who was not even satisfied that they had any Truth in them?

As for what *Sextus* adds, that some have believ'd that *Arcefilas* did follow the Method of the *Pyrrhonians*, in handling any Subject, when he taught his young Disciples, who had not as yet receiv'd any Impression of his Doctrine, in order to discover the Capacity of their Genius; and that when he found them to be subtle and ingenious, he taught them the

the Doctrine of *Plato* in a positive and dogmatical Manner; *Sextus* doth not disown but that he relates this of *Arcefilas*, only from Hearsay, and uncertain Reports. But after all, though it were all true, ought we to judge of the Merit of a Doctrine from the Fickleness of the Teacher?

THE last Difference, we find between the *Academicks* and the *Scepticks*, is mention'd by *Aulus Gellius*, (*Lib. ii. cap. 5.*) an Author who is more of a Grammarian than a Philosopher; and it is this, That whereas both Sides being agreed, that Man can neither comprehend nor decide any Thing, the *Academicks*, have a Kind of *Comprehension* of, and make a Kind of Decision of it; whereas the *Pyrrhonians* pretend that even this doth in no Ways appear true, seeing nothing appears so to them.

*Seventh
Difference.*

IN the first Place, I know what it is to comprehend and to decide, but I don't know what is as it were to comprehend, or as it were to decide; for if as 'twere to comprehend be to comprehend, what Need was there to obscure the Word to comprehend, which is so clear, by adding the Word as it were to it? Besides, Can any one say that the *Academicks* comprehend any Thing, who make Profession of knowing nothing, and of not knowing even that, that they know nothing? Or how could *Arcefilas* fancy that he could comprehend any Thing, he who will not so much as suffer Man to hold any Opinion?

AND

AND if *as it were to comprehend* be not the same as *to comprehend*, there can be no Difference between the *Academicks* and *Pyrrhonians*, seeing both Sides agree that they can comprehend nothing, and that they don't even comprehend that they comprehend nothing; but if *as it were to comprehend* a Thing, be to seem to the Understanding that a Thing is so, as if when any one says that he doth *as it were comprehend* that a Thing is true, he meant only that That Thing seem'd true to him, and therefore as *Aulus Gellius* pretends that it seems to the *Academicks* that they comprehend nothing, and that it doth not seem to the *Pyrrhonians* that they comprehend nothing, it refers to the third Difference, which we have mention'd after *Sextus Empiricus*, the Invalidity of which we have likewise prov'd.

BUT if *as it were to comprehend* be the same as *to comprehend*, (as *Carneades* would have it) but not without some Room for doubting, such as he granted to Human Understanding; it is an Abuse of the Word *comprehend*, for that Comprehension is really an Opinion. Since therefore these Differences between the *Scepticks* and *Academicks* are either none at all, or at most but trivial ones, 'tis not without Reason that *Sextus*, who has collected them, and was perfectly well vers'd in this Matter, find so great an Affinity between the Doctrin

of *Pyrrho* and that of *Arcesilas*, that they may pass for one and the same Sect ; even *Seneca* himself tells us, (*Epist.* 89.) that both of them go upon the same Principle of knowing nothing : And *Aulus Gellius*, after all tells us, that both the Disciples of *Pyrrho* and those of *Arcesilas*, were known by the same Names of *Scepticks*, *Epicureans* and *Aporeticks* ; and it was for this very Reason that *Arcesilas* was reckon'd among the *Scepticks*, as I have elsewhere observ'd : (*Aul. Gell. Lib. ii. cap. 5.*)

38. FOR my Part, after I was once well satisfy'd that the Sect of the *Academicks*, and that of the *Pyrrhonians*, was one and the same ; I could not forbear often wondering why the Philosophers, who embrac'd it, chose rather to be call'd *Academicks* than *Pyrrhonians*, as if they were asham'd of the latter, and the former had been an Honour to them. Whilst I was endeavouring to account for it, two very probable Reasons occur'd to me : The one was, that few Philosophers of any Reputation ever came out of *Pyrrho's* School, whereas the Academy has produc'd many excellent ones, to whom it was an Honour to be associated ; the other is, that both *Pyrrho* and his Disciples have been ridicul'd, as if they had entirely reduc'd Mens Lives to a State of Inactivity, and that those, who should be call'd *Pyrrhonians*, would fall under the same whimsical Imputation.

Why those Philosophers, who made Profession of doubting, choserather to pass for Academicks than Pyrrhonians.

It is not
true that
the Sect of
Scepticks,
or Pyrrho-
nians, was
interrupted
after Ti-
mon.

39. BUT let us resume the List of those who have more particularly signalized themselves, in this Art of doubting. *Diogenes Laërtius*, has, upon the Authority of *Hyppobotus* and *Sotion*, given us the Sequel of it, as far as *Saturninus Cythenas*, a Disciple of *Sextus Empiricus*, whose Works are still extant. He tells us, that *Menodotus* was mistaken, when he wrote that *Timon*, *Pyrrho's* Disciple, had no Successor, and that That Sect was then extinct until the Time of *Ptolomy of Cyrus*, who restor'd it, after which it maintain'd it self by a continual Succession unto *Sextus*. For this *Ptolomy* was a Disciple of *Eubulus*, who was Disciple of *Euphranor*, and *Euphranor* of *Timon*, under whom he had a great many Fellow-Scholars.

ALL these being Men of no great Fame, we must not wonder at *Cicero's* affirming in so many Places, that the Sect of *Pyrrho* had been rejected, and was come to nothing long before his Time; or at *Seneca's* Complaining of it in his natural Questions, *Lib. vii. cap. 32.* 'Tis from this very Thing that *Aristotle* writes after *Eusebius*, (*Præp. Evang. Lib. xiv. cap. 18.*) that the *Pyrrhonians*, being forsaken and confounded, were buried in Silence, as if they had never been till the Time of *Enesidemus*, who reviv'd and restor'd their Sect at *Alexandria*.

40. WE shall here speak only of some of the most famous of them, lest it should take up too much of our Time ; but especially of *Timon of Phlius*, who ridicul'd the Boldness of the *Dogmaticks* by some jeering Verses, which are call'd *Silles*. He taught that whosoever did desire to be happy, ought to look upon every Thing as uncertain and indifferent ; that neither our Senses nor Opinions teach us either what is true, or what is false ; that our Minds ought not to incline either to one Side or the other ; that we ought to affirm nothing, but whatever Thing we are speaking of, we ought not to say that it is, rather than that it is not ; and that whosoever kept himself in that Disposition, would never be expos'd to any Trouble or Uneasiness of Mind.

41. *Nausiphanes* of *Teos* is likewise reckon'd amongst the Disciples of *Pyrrho*. *Seneca* doth testify, (*Epist.* 89.) that he affirm'd as well as *Timon*, that of all the Things that appear to us, we ought not to think that any one is, rather than that it is not. *Seneca* adds, That he us'd to say moreover, that there was but one Thing certain, viz. that nothing is certain : Though this last I could never believe, though *Seneca* should swear to it ; for before *Nausiphanes* could express himself so, he must have gone back to the old Academy, and forsook the School of *Pyrrho*, who constantly taught that there is nothing certain. *Timon* and

Nausiphanes, were Followers of *Pyriho*, and *Epicurus* of *Nausiphanes*.

Theodo-
sius of Bi-
thynia.

42. *Theodosius* of *Bithynia*, or *Tripoly*, follow'd the same Party; he was a Man of extraordinary Parts, and strengthened this Sect by his excellent Works.

Æneside-
mus of
Gnossus.

43. THE same School did likewise produce *Ænesidemus* of *Gnossus* who revived and enrich'd this Sect at *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, when it was beginning to decay.

Ptolomy
of Alex-
andria.

44. SOME Authors have reckon'd in this List the Astronomer *Ptolomy*, who maintain'd that Human Understanding was debar'd the Attainment of Sciences, either by reason of its Weakness, or of the Obscurity of Things.

Cornelius
Celsus.
Favorinus.

45. 46. *Cornelius Celsus* did that amongst the *Romans*, which *Ænesidemus* had done in *Alexandria*. *Favorinus* follow'd his Example, for having declar'd himself a *Sceptick*, he did in some of his excellent Works set forth the ten Modes of the *Pyrrhonians*, and maintain'd that there was no Faculty in Man, that could enable him to comprehend any Thing.

Sextus
Empiri-
cus.

47. BUT Time having destroy'd all those Writings, *Sextus Empiricus* repair'd that Loss by his own; and both by his excellent Book of *Hypotyposes*, wherein the Form and Construction of his Philosophy is exactly set forth; and by his Dissertations against the *Dogmaticks*, he clearly exposes the Vanity and

and Uncertainty of those Sciences, which are reckon'd the most certain.

48. SOME Authors have thought that *Sextus Empiricus* was the same with *Sextus Chæronensis*, the Son of *Plutarch's* Sister, and one of the Emperor *Marcus Aurelius's* Tutors. They both liv'd at the same Time, both were call'd by the same Name, they were both Philosophers, and both the one and the other had a Tutor, call'd *Herodotus*. *Suidas*, a sorry Author, doth not overthrow this Opinion, when he affirms one to be of *Chæroneæ*, and the other of *Libya*; for he might be call'd a *Libyan*, because he stay'd a long while at *Cyrene*, a City in *Libya*, as the famous *Pomponius*, though a *Roman*, was surnam'd *Atticus*, by reason of his long Stay at *Athens*.

Whether
Sextus
Empiricus
be the same
with Sex-
tus of
Chæ-
roneæ.

As for the Objection of *Herodotus* being their Tutor, it concludes nothing; for it is affirm'd that *Herodotus*, the Tutor of *Sextus Chæronensis*, was a *Philadelphian*, and consequently different from *Herodotus*, Tutor to *Sextus* of *Libya*, who was a Native of *Tarsus*; *Philadelpia* and *Tarsus* are two Cities in *Sicily* very near one another, and therefore might easily be confounded by reason of their Vicinity.

It is further objected, that *Sextus* of *Chæroneæ* was a Stoick. whereas *Sextus* of *Libya* was a *Pyrrhonian*; for *Capitolinus* affirms, That *Marcus Aurelius* was a Disciple of *Sextus* of *Chæroneæ*, *Plutarch's* Nephew,

Nephew, of *Junius Rusticus*, of *Claudius Maximus*, and of *Cinna Catulus*, Stoicks. But this Objection is of no Weight; for the Words of this Passage, in the Manner it is express'd, may as well signifie that the three last were Stoicks, as indeed they were, but not that *Sextus* was so; for *Suidas* tells us, that both the one and the other *Sextus* were *Pyrrhonians*.

SOME urge still further, that *Sextus* the *Pyrrhonian* was surnamed *Empiricus*, but not *Sextus* of *Cheronea*; but who doth not know that these Surnames are often omitted, as in those Passages of *Suidas*, and in the *Isagogue*, which is attributed to *Galen*, in all which there is no Surname added to the Name of *Sextus*. *Causabon* adds, (in *Capitol. vit. Marc. Aurel.*) that the Emperor *Marcus Aurelius* writes, that he had learn'd from *Sextus* the Method of finding, of comprehending, and setting in order those Doctrines which are necessary to human Life, which can no Ways agree with *Sextus Empiricus*, who taught that we could comprehend nothing, and rejected all Kinds of Doctrines as useless and vain.

BUT it is very likely that those Doctrines, necessary to Life, were only some useful Rules for the Conduct of our Lives, and and not Principles tending to the Search of Truth. For the Doctrine of the *Scepticks* is, that we must suspend our Belief and Consent, in our Search after Truth; but that in the

the common Uses of Life, we ought to follow Probability. I believe therefore that the Emperor did express himself in those Terms about *Sextus*, in order to shew, that, though he was a *Sceptick* in Doctrine, he was a *Dogmatist* in his Life and Conversation.

THE Proof brought by *Sanmasius*, to shew that they were two different *Sextus's*, is not weightier than the foregoing. He says that *Sextus Chæronensis* was contemporary with *Galen*, and that *Sextus Empiricus* must be older than he, seeing he reckons him in his *Isagogue*, among the *Empiricks*, as if he must of necessity have liv'd before *Galen*, because he was quoted by him, and as if we did not often quote our Contemporaries. But not to insist too much on this Exception, it is sufficient to say, that this *Isagogue* seems to be the Work of some other Author than *Galen*: However, I will not affirm any Thing concerning it, nor depart in Haste from the Law I have been establishing, of doubting of every Thing: but leave every one to his Liberty of judging as he shall think fit.

49. HOWEVER, this *Sextus*, we are speaking of, had join'd the Profession of the *Sceptick* Philosophy to that of the Sect of Physicians who stick to Experience, and for that reason is call'd *Empiric*; whose Authors were *Acron* of *Agrirentum* and *Philinus* of *Cos*. *Menodotus* of *Nicomedia*, *Saturni-*

The great Affinity between the Sects of the Scepticks Empiricks and Methodicks.

nus Cythenas, and that *Marcellus*, who, to conceal his Adherence to the Doctrine of the *Scepticks*, chose to be call'd *Empiricus*; these three, I say, join'd the *Sceptick* Doctrine to the *Empirick* Physick, as *Sextus* had done before.

AND yet this same *Sextus* maintains (*Hypot. Lib. i. cap. 34.*) that this Sect of Physick which is call'd *Methodical*, whose Author was *Themison*, doth come nearer to the Doctrine of the *Scepticks* than that of the *Empiricks*, in as much as the latter affirm that Things uncertain cannot be comprehended; whereas the *Scepticks* forbid the affirming of any Thing. From thence it follows, that, this Affirmation only excepted, we shall find a very great Affinity between the *Sceptick* and *Empirick* Sects, such as *Sextus* found between the *Sceptick* and *Methodical*; and so much the greater, in as much as we read in *Celsus*, (*Corn. Cels. de Re Medic. Proem. Lib. i.*) that the *Empirick*, as well as the *Sceptick*, taught that the Nature of Things is incomprehensible, and that nothing can be comprehended, and this appears from the Contests of those who have treated of these Matters; that Physick doth wholly depend on Use and Experience, without Reason's having any Share in it.

THE same *Sextus* maintains in several other Places, not only that the *Pyrrhonians* were not so ignorant as they have been thought to be, but that they excell'd all the rest

rest of Philosophers in the Use and Experience of Things, that is, that they were Masters of the *Empirick* Learning, as the Signification of the Word doth intimate, and that the *Empiricks* did reject all Kind of reasoning; which is nothing else but the Quintessence of Scepticism, provided it be done without Affectation.

50. *Lucian* of *Samosates* was contemporary with these I have been speaking of. *Lucian*, *Phocius* (*Timem.* 128.) puts him in the Number of those, whose Opinion it was that we ought to stick to no Opinion.

51. *Uranius* made open Profession of Scepticism; he liv'd in the Days of *Justinian*; and *Chosroes*, King of *Persia*, a great Lover of Philosophy, did heap very great Honours and rich Presents upon him, wrote several Letters to him, full of Expressions both of his Esteem and Favour, and vouchsafed to be instructed by him. It would be therefore very wonderful, if such a King, who was neither Dunce nor Clown, should have profess'd so great an Esteem for him, had he been as ignorant and silly, as *Agathias* has represented him. (*Lib.* ii.) if what he says be true, it must be granted that the Sect of the *Scepticks* which he profess'd, had Charms enough of it self to captivate those *Barbarians*, tho' by a Man that knew so little of it, and who was moreover loaden with Vices and Infamy. Many more Philosophers there were, who have adher'd to this Sect, the further

further Inquiry of whom I shall leave to the studious.

And
among the
Dogma-
ticks Por-
phiry.

§ 2. HAVING now run over all the Sects of Philosophers, who would have us doubt of every Thing, and affirm nothing; let us now come to the *Dogmaticks*. Not to mention the Stoicks, who even prostituted their Belief to old Womens Fables, and yet forbad their Followers all rash and precipitated Judgments, and gave a convenient Name to this Cautiousness, calling it *Aproptosis*, and earnestly recommending it to them; we shall soon hear from others a very plain Confession of their Ignorance, but especially from *Porphiry*, who was without Doubt a very great Man in all Respects, excepting in his extreme Aversion to Christianity, and who in his Book *De Animâ*, which he dedicated to *Boëthus*, doth openly acknowledge that there is no Certainty at all in Philosophy, and that all Things are doubtful and uncertain.

Aristippus. § 3. *Aristippus*, Author of the *Cyrenaick* Sect, who was much more ancient than *Porphiry*, and after him *Aristo* of *Chios* taught that Natural Philosophy was incomprehensible, and vastly above us, that we have nothing to do with *Logick*, but only with *Morality*, yet not to the whole, but only to that Part of it, which treats of Virtues and Vices, saying that we ought to prefer Virtue to Vice, and that we should look upon all the rest as indifferent, and even Health it self,

self, which they did not think preferable to Sickness.

54. *Herillus* of *Carthage* did likewise Herillus. hold all Things indifferent, and forbad the preferring one Thing to another, Knowledge only excepted, in which he affirm'd the *Summum Bonum* did consist.

55. *Menedemus* of *Eretria*, *Plato's* Disciple, never would adhere to any Doctrine. Menedemus.

56. 'Twas from him, and from *Phedo* who preceded him, that the *Eliack* or *Eretrick* Sect came; and 'tis of these and of the *Megarick*, who follow the Doctrine of The Eretrick and Megarick Philosophers. *Euclid* of *Megara*, and have been call'd *Eristicks* or *Dialecticks*, it is of these I say, that *Seneca* writes (*Epist.* 89.) that the *Pyrrhonians*, *Megarians*, *Eretricks* and *Academicks*, who are the Authors of a new Kind of Science, which consists in knowing nothing, do spend their Time and study much about the same Matters; and *Cicero* (*Lib.* iv. *Acad.*) puts *Stilpo*, *Diodorus* and *Alexinus* in the Number of the Professors of that Science.

57. *Monimus* the *Cynic*, as well as *Anaxarchus*, Monimus. was wont to say that all Things depended from Opinion, that they were like Pictures, and differ'd in nothing from the Visions of mad Folks, or of a Dream, and that there was no Rule of Truth.

58. IF we now pass over to foreign Nations, we shall find many of them of this very Opinion that we ought to suspend And among strange Nations the Magi. our

our Judgment and Belief. *Diogenes Laërtius* (in *Pyrrhon*.) tells us, that *Anaxarchus*, and *Pyrrho* had learn'd, from the *Magi* and *Gymnosophists* of *India*, this excellent Philosophy and Method of disputing; which forbids us to think that any Thing can be understood, and to give our Assent and Belief to any Thing.

The Brach-
mans.

59. THE *Brachmans*, according to the Testimony of *Strabo*, (*Lib. xv.*) and *Megasthenes*, maintain'd that nothing is either good or evil, because what seems good to one Man, seems bad to another, and this sufficiently shews that the *Sceptick* Philosophy has penetrated to the utmost Parts of the *East*.

Certain
Turkish
Philoso-
phers called
Amaz'd.

60. WE find among the *Turks* a Sect of Philosophers called by them *Hairetis*, which signifies the same as *Astonished* or *Amazed*. These make Profession of doubting of every Thing, and because they believe it impossible to discern Truth from Falshood; they never do affirm any Thing; according to them every Thing is probable, but nothing is certain; they are obedient to the Laws, but they carry Scepticism too far, in using this Method of doubting even in the common Offices of Life.

Among the
Jews the
Essenians.

61. SOME of the *Jews* have likewise retain'd this Method of doubting. *Philo* tells us, That the *Essenians* held this for a Maxim, that Logick was not necessary to the Acquirement of Virtue, that Natural Philo-

Philosophy was above the Reach of Human Understanding, and that we ought to apply our selves solely to Theology, in what relates to God, and the Creation of the World; which is very like the Doctrine of *Aristotle of Chios*.

62. THE *Seboreans*, i. e. *Opinators*, And Seboreans. for so their Name signifies, another Sect of Philosophers, among the *Jews*, made use of the *Sceptick* Method in treating of Theological Matters; and in their examining the Doctrine of the *Talmud*, they disputed *Pro* and *Con*, without ever affirming any Thing.

63. *Rabbi Moses Ben. Maimon*, who had R. Moses Ben. Maimon. freed himself from the silly Notions of the *Rabbins*, and imbibed a much sölider Doctrine, says “ (*cap. 11. de Idolol. § 4, 5, 6.*) that the Capacity of our Understanding is so limited, that there is not a Man in the whole World that can attain to the Knowledge of Truth; for which Reason we ought to free our selves from all Notions which may divert us from the Service of God, and the Observance of his Laws, and that if we entertain any such Notions, the Worship of God will be wholly set aside; and that *Moses* meant the very same Thing when he said to the *Jews*, *Numb. xv. 39.*) Give not your selves up to seek after your own hearts; and after your own eyes, after which you use to go a whoring; that is, suffer not your selves to be led by your own
“ Under-

“ Understanding, which is so weak and limited; and do not flatter your selves with
 “ Hopes of attaining to the Knowledge of
 “ Truth”.

And a-
 mong
 the Arabs
 the Talk-
 ers.


64. THE *Arabians* have likewise their *Scepticks*. The *Jews* call them *Medabberim*, i. e. *Talkers*, or rather *Logicians*, they are often mention'd by *Averroes*, *Moses Ben. Maimon*. and even by some other *Rabbins*. They might be justly call'd the *Scholastic Divines of Arabia*. Having learn'd the Art of doubting from the *Greeks* and *Syrians*, they had continual Disputes with the *Dogmaticks*, refus'd to give any Credit to their Senses or Understanding, and held it for a constant and principal Rule, that Man can know nothing; inso-much that they reject'd all those Geometrical Demonstrations as vain and deceitful, which by others are look'd upon as the most certain. And what makes most for our present Purpose is, that the chief of those, who first receiv'd this Doctrine, were principally induced thereto, because it was very fit and proper to captivate our Minds to the Obedience of Faith and Religion.





C H A P. XV.

Wherein we conclude from all that has been said before, 1st. That the only Way to prevent falling into Error, is to doubt. 2dly. That the Dogmatick Presumption has produc'd an Infinity of Errors. 3dly. That the Academicks and Scepticks, affirming nothing, cannot be deceiv'd; and that they are the only ones who deserve the Name of Philosophers.

I.  E must therefore conclude, that ^{it follows} all Philosophy both sacred and ^{from what} profane; and not only those ^{has been} who make Profession of doubt- ^{said, that} ing, but even the very *Dogma-* ^{we ought} *ticks*, ^{to doubt,} expect that we should doubt and suspend ^{&c.} our Judgment, and that we should not be too easy of Belief. For they plainly see that there is no other Way to correct or shun Errors, but by stripping our selves entirely of all Opinions and Prejudices, by a constant and general Doubt. By this *Des Cartes* began the first Principles of his Philosophy,

Philosophy, being persuaded that this was the best Way to strike at the Root of Error, and to work with Certainty in our Search after Truth, but this very Man, who had so wisely submitted himself to this Law of doubting, rejected it afterwards, as if it had been of no other Use to him, but to explode the Opinions of other Philosophers, and was become useless to him in the examining or confuting his own; so that he has committed the same Fault, which he had reprov'd in others, and with a Temerity equal to that of the very *Dogmaticks*.

The Boldness of the Dogmaticks has caused infinite Errors.

2. NOW as a Man who is going to a Place that lies Eastward, and not knowing the Way, should go towards the West, would not be so much out of his Way, if he stopp'd in some by Corner, as if he went on a quite contrary Way, so our Understanding which is fasten'd to the Earth, and imprison'd in an earthly Body, discovering that this Obstacle doth stop his Way to Truth, will more easily shun falling into Error, if he continues in Ignorance, and in that Doubt which accompanies Ignorance, than by endeavouring in vain to remove those Obstacles, and embracing a Cloud instead of a *Juno*. In this consists the Difference between the *Dogmaticks* and *Scepticks*; for what monstrous Opinions has not the Presumption of the *Dogmaticks* produc'd? *Cicero* and *Varro*, both excellent Men, and very well acquainted with all the Sects of

Philo-

Philosophers, have already observed that nothing can be advanced so absurd, or be fram'd in the Brain of a Man in a raving Fit of Madness, so strange, but some Philosopher has affirm'd it.

BUT what Absurdity or impertinent Doctrine can the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* be charged with, who maintain no Doctrine at all? They are certainly the only ones who deserve to be call'd Philosophers, if we stick to the true Signification of that Name. For Philosophy according to the Etymology of the Word, being nothing else but the Love or Study of Wisdom and Truth; and Wisdom according to the ancient Philosopher's Definition, being the Knowledge of divine and human Things, and of their Causes; they, who apply themselves to the Study of Wisdom, do truly deserve the Name of Philosophers, and they who have attain'd to the Knowledge of divine and human Things, that is to say, to Wisdom, are truly wise. Now this is that Knowledge which the *Dogmaticks* do boast they have attain'd, and they even suffer'd themselves heretofore to be stil'd Wise-men: And *Pythagoras* was the first, who, being convinced of his Ignorance, refus'd it, desiring only to be call'd a Lover of Wisdom.

The Academicks and Scepticks affirming nothing cannot be deceived, &c.

FOR as the Poet *Æschilus* wisely said, (*Agamem.*) it is one Thing to know a Thing only by guess; and another to know it clearly; the former doth properly belong to the

K

Acade-

Academicks, who acknowledge not only that they know nothing, but likewise that they can know nothing either of divine or human Things, and that they only consider them afar off. Let the proud *Dogmaticks* therefore value themselves as much as they please upon the Name of Wise-men, since they think they have a Right to it, and fancy they have attain'd to that Knowledge in which Wisdom consists: As for the *Academicks*, they will be contented with the plain and modest Name of Philosophers, since they love and reverence Wisdom as a Thing much above their Reach and Capacity, tho' *Lactantius* speaking of them (*Lib. iv. cap. 1.*) truly said, That those, who knew themselves in part, have been wiser than they who thought themselves Wise-men.

The End of the first Book.



Book

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BOOK II.

*Wherein is shewed which is the
exactest, safest, and justest
Method of Reasoning and
Philosophy.*



C H A P. I.

*Man is naturally deprived of the Means
necessary to the Attainment of Truth.*



AFTER our Provençal Gentle-
man had spoke thus far, and was
going to continue his Discourse,
truly said I, I never could relish
that presumptuous Philosophy, and obsti-
nate Method of arguing, which is so tena-
cious of its Notions and Opinions: I al-
ways thought it a much shorter and better
Way to come at the Knowledge of Truth,
to keep our Opinion within some Limits,

and to be more modest in our Discourses, and never to maintain any Doctrine, how probable soever, with so much Obstinacy and Prejudice, as not to be always ready to hear any Objections against it, or even to change our Minds if Need be. But on the other Hand, I cannot but think that the Instability of the *Academicks*, who are always more ready to speak what they don't think, than what they really do think, throws every Thing into Disorder and Confusion, and puts an End to all Kind of Knowledge, since we are no surer of knowing that which we understand best, than if we did not know it all.

Y O U will therefore oblige me very much, if you'll take the Pains to teach me how far we ought to doubt; for if we must always doubt, if every Thing is hidden, obscure and uncertain; if all the Avenues to Truth are stopp'd; then there is an End of Philosophy, and all the Study and Pains which we have been taking these many Years, to come to the Knowledge of Truth, are entirely fruitless and vain; to which he answer'd as follows.

T H I S is no new Complaint which you make against the *Academicks*, neither if it was a just one, would it concern them so much as it doth Nature it self. For is it the Fault of the *Academicks*, that Man is so fram'd, that he cannot of himself attain to the Knowledge of Truth? They are no
more

more answerable for that, than they are for Man's not being able to fly, or to live for ever. Neither do we really find that the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* have made a less Progress in their Study of Wisdom, or receiv'd lesser Helps from it, in order to their becoming wiser and more learned, than the *Dogmaticks* have done; but we shall speak more fully to this Point by and by: But at present seeing you would have me tell you how far I think this Law of doubting is to be carried, I shall freely impart to you my Opinion concerning this Original, or rather this Root of Philosophy; for as we are alone, I can freely speak to you, but neither am, nor ought to be willing that it should be spread among the Vulgar.

WHEN I mention the Vulgar, I don't mean the common Sort of People, who live by the Work of their Hands, but the Vulgar of the Men of Letters, who are wont to look upon the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* as mad Men; though this Consideration could never deter me from preferring their Sect, whose whole System, or rather my own, I am now going to explain to you: For I would have you to understand, that in Matters of Philosophy I will be entirely free, and follow my own Sentiments, and be of no Sect but my own.

IN the first Place I believe, it is very plain from all the Reasons I have been giving you, that the Nature of Man is such,

that he cannot come to any clear and certain Knowledge of Truth by his own proper Strength. I don't deny but that there is a Truth in the Things themselves, *viz.* That which is call'd *Truth of Existence*; for God knows them as they really are, but there is an Obstacle in Man, which hinders him from knowing them, and this Obstacle consists in the Want of the proper and necessary Means to come to a perfect Knowledge of the Truth.

NEITHER do I say that Man can have no Knowledge at all of the Truth, I only say that he cannot know it thoroughly, clearly, and with such an entire Certitude, as that it shall want nothing to make it perfect, such as I have already spoken of, and shall say something more by and by; for it is possible that some Man may have an Idea imprinted in his Mind, which shall be like the external Object, I don't say with a perfect, proper and absolute Likeness, which cannot be found but among Things of the same Kind, as between one Man and another, or between Tree and Tree, but I mean an imperfect Likeness, such as may be found between an Original and its Copy.

BUT when the Understanding, from that Idea, forms a Judgment of any external Object, from which that Idea proceeds, he cannot clearly and certainly know whether that Judgment agrees with the external Object; and it is in that Agreement that Truth doth

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consist, as I said before. So that though he knows the Truth, yet is he not sure that he doth, nor can he be sufficiently assured that he hath known it; therefore he cannot have a perfect Knowledge of the Truth.

WHEN therefore I say that Man can neither know the Things themselves, nor the Truth of Things; I mean only by a clear and certain Knowledge, such as that by which, not only Truth is to be known, but with such likewise as that by which we certainly know, and are sure that, we know the Truth; for to know Truth without being sure that we do know it, is the same as if we did not know it at all.


I have produced already several Proofs, which are in all Respects very clear and evident, to shew that Man cannot be sure whether the Judgment he form'd from the Idea imprinted in his Mind, be like the external Object from which that Idea did proceed; the chiefest of all which Proofs is, that we cannot apply the Ideas of Things, and the Judgment which the Understanding forms from those Ideas, to the Things themselves, in order to examine and discover the Agreement between those Judgments and the external Objects; in which Agreement we said the Truth did consist; for the Shadows or Images of Things do not come immediately from them to our Understandings, but pass through several Mediums, as I shew'd before, and then through our Senses which do

spoil and adulterate them; neither is there any other Way through which those Ideas of Things can reach to our Understandings.



CHAP. II.

Faith doth supply the Defects of Reason, and makes those Things to become most certain, which were less so from Reason.

 **UT** God of his infinite Goodness has repair'd this Defect of human Nature, by granting us the inestimable Gift of Faith, which confirms our staggering Reason, and removes the Obstacles of those Doubts, which we bring along with our Knowledge of Things: For my Reason not being able to give me an entire Knowledge, or a perfect Certitude, whether there be any Bodies, what is the Origin of the World, and many more such like Things, after I have once receiv'd the Faith, all my Doubts begin to disappear, like Hobgoblins at the Sun rising; this made *Thomas Aquinas* to say, (*Tam. ii. 2. Quest. 2. Answ. 4.*) *That Man ought to receive as Articles of Faith, not only those Things which are above Reason, but even those which may be known by Reason, for* Cer-

Certainty's Sake. For human Reason being very defective in divine Matters, an Instance of which we have in those Philosophers, who in their Enquiry into human Things, having made use of natural Means, have been mistaken in the most material Points, and have been found to contradict one another; to the End that Men should have a sure and indubitable Knowledge of God, it was necessary that divine Matters should be taught them by Faith, and as having been taught them by God himself, who cannot lie.

THIS Passage seems to have been taken out of that of *S. Austin* which we quoted before, but for its Importance, and the Relation it has to our present Subject, very well deserves to be here repeated; *because, says that Father, (De Morib. Eccles. Cathol. cap. 20.) Human Understanding is so obscured by habitual Darkness, and so overwhelm'd in the Night of Sin, that it cannot steadfastly behold the Brightness and Holiness of Reason; it was a very salutary Institution, that we should suffer our staggering Sight, which is cover'd with the Branches of our Humanity, to be guided and directed by Authority towards the Light of Truth.*

To this *Aquinas* adds, *That the Search which is made by the Help of natural Reason is not sufficient to bring us to the Knowledge of Things divine, or even of those which can be proved by Reason; and*
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in another Place he says (22. Quest. 1. Answ. 5.) that those Things which can be demonstrated, such as the Being of a God, his Unity, and the like, are reckoned amongst those Things which we are bound to believe, because they are insisted upon beforehand, and must precede those which belong to Faith, and be at least presupposed by those who have no Demonstration of them.

WHAT Thomas Aquinas says, concerning the Knowledge of divine Things, doth likewise extend to that of human Things according to the Doctrine of Suarez, who says (Disp. vi. de fide Sect. v. Art. 11.) that we very often correct our natural Light by the Light of Faith, even in those Things which seem to be first Principles, as may be seen in the following one: Those Things which agree to a Third, do agree to one another, which with Respect to the Trinity ought to be confin'd to finite Beings; and in the Case of other Mysteries, especially those of the Incarnation, &c. we bring several other Limitations, to the End that nothing may be repugnant to Faith; which is a certain Sign that the Light of Faith is more certain, because it is founded on the first and principal Truth, which it is more impossible should either deceive or be deceived, then it is that the natural Knowledge of Man should be mistaken.

S T. *Austin* (*de Serm. Dom. in Mont. Lib. ii. cap. 15.*) would not even have us attribute to Reason that Knowledge of Truth, which Men believe their Understanding acquires by the Help of Reason, but would have us ascribe it to the very Light of Truth, with which every Man is enlighten'd in proportion to his Capacity.

WHO can know the Truth without God? (says Tertullian de Anim. cap. 2.) who can know God without Christ? Who can know Christ without the Holy Ghost? Or who can obtain the Holy Ghost without the Sacrament of Faith?


HENCE it is that the Apostle, having thunder'd out these Words, (1 Cor. i. 19, 20.) *I will destroy the Wisdom of the Wise, and bring to nothing the Understanding of the Prudent: Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the learned Disputer of this World? Has not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World? And forewarned us not to be caught through Philosophy and vain Deceit after the Tradition of Men, and the Rudiments of this World,* (Col. ii. 8.) afterwards assures us that *by Faith we stand,* (2 Cor. i. 24.) *That we walk by Faith, and not by Sight,* (ibid. 5. 7.) and *that we are established in the Faith or by Faith,* (Col. ii. 7.) As therefore Faith comes to help our staggering Reason in those Things that belong to Faith; so it likewise assists us in all Things which we know by the Help

Help of Reason, in order to dispel our Doubts, and restore Reason to those Privileges from which it was fallen, that is, to the Knowledge of Truth which it naturally desires.



C H A P. III.

Proving 1. That there is nothing in our Understanding but what has been in the Senses. 2. Against Plato. 3. Against Proclus. 4. And against Cartesius,

I.  U T said I to him (for I did often interrupt him) what was it I heard you advance a while ago, that there was no other Way for our Ideas to come to the Understanding, but through the interposing *Medium's*, and through our Senses? Have we not several innate Ideas in our Understanding, which never came to us through our Senses; such as the Ideas we have of our own very Understanding, of Angels, of God, and such as we have from those common Maxims and Notions which the Logicians call Axioms? Do we not know those universal Natures of Things which

the vulgar Sort of Philosophers call *Essences*, which are real and immutable, and are no Ways liable to be deprav'd by the Senses, like those Ideas which come to us from without?

YOU spoke in the Nick of Time, answer'd he; the Order of those Matters I promised to explain to you did just bring me to it; your Question is certainly a very material one, and has been with great Warmth debated among the greatest Masters of Philosophy. For *Pythagoras*, *Timeus*, and the rest of the *Pythagoreans*; *Socrates*, *Plato*, and all the *Platonic* Philosophers; maintained that we bring certain Ideas along with us into the World. *Democritus* and his Follower *Epicurus*, *Aristotle* and all the *Peripateticks*, did on the contrary reject all those innate Ideas, and would admit of none but such as came to us from without, and were convey'd through the Senses, and form'd in the Brain; you shall have my Opinion of this Matter, since you seem desirous of it, and that the Order of our Dispute leads us to it, but you must expect to hear what may not suit with the World's Taste, nor perhaps your own.

As I did heretofore look upon *Plato's* Opinion, concerning those innate Ideas, to be much more for the Honour of Mankind, and to heighten very much his Dignity, so I did earnestly wish that it might be true; for I thought it a great Glory to human Nature

Nature to have an Understanding given it, after it had been imbellish'd by God himself, and adorn'd with the Gifts of Heaven. I sought therefore every where for such Proofs, as might convince me, and every Man else, of the Truth of this Opinion. I found in *Plato* and in *Proclus*, and other *Platonicks*, some specious Reasonings, such as might easily have shaken a less attentive Mind than mine; but then they began to appear to me without Force, as soon as I came to shake off that Pride which is natural to all Mankind.

2. THE chief and almost the only Argument which *Socrates* makes use of in *Plato*, to prove that we bring some Ideas into the World withus, comes to no more than this; that Human Understanding could never heap up and conceive such an infinite Variety of Notions, in so short a Time as that of our Life, being surrounded and wrapped up in this Mass of Flesh, unless he had brought them along with him ready produced and form'd in him; and so that we do not learn what is taught us, but only recal it to Mind.

SUCH Discourses do better become the Mouth of a publick Orator, than that of a Philosopher; for if any Man shall deny these Things as I now do, and shall affirm that our Understanding is so framed, that it is easily affected, whenever the Senses being stirred up by any outward Object, and the

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Fibres of the Nerves, and the animal Spirits mov'd by it, the Brain receives the Impression of it; and that the Understanding receiving the Notice, by that Impression of the Brain, of what passes without, it likewise agitates the animal Spirits, and examining curiously all those Traces which have been impress'd on the Brain, and putting together those Things which were asunder, and separating those which were heap'd together, and comparing those which have any Relation to one another, it considers what is present, and beholds what goes before and after them, from all which the Conduct of our Life, and the Concatenation of Knowledge depends; whoever, I say, shall affirm these Things, what Answer can a *Platonick* Philosopher make to him?

3. THE Proofs which *Proclus* brings, are somewhat weightier; he affirms that whatever comes from the Senses, is subject to Change; and that Man has some Ideas or Images imprinted in his Understanding, which are eternal and immutable, such as the Ideas of Figures, Numbers, Motion, &c. which therefore could never come from the Senses; for if such fix'd and constant Ideas could proceed from the Senses, which are so weak, and so subject to Error, the Effect would be more perfect than the Cause. But for my Part, I know nothing of such eternal Ideas; for that which I find in me, for Instance, of a Triangle, is

Of the WEAKNESS of

is something obscure and confus'd, it being neither circumscrib'd nor determin'd, but only produc'd in me from the Idea of those particular, Triangles which I have seen. Let this be said, once for all, of all those Ideas which we call Ideas of *pure and simple Intelligence*.

Proclus adds further, That the best Demonstrations are those which consist of most universal Propositions, and that those are the most imperfect which consist of particular Propositions; which could never be, if Universals were produced from Particulars; seeing that which is produc'd by the Cause is preferable to that which is produc'd by the Effect. In this Case, I will not dispute about the Force of Demonstrations, whether they consist of universal or particular Propositions; but this I do deny, that that which is produced by the Cause, is always preferable to that which is produc'd by the Effect. For as Grass is fitter to fatten a Lamb, than the Earth that produceth it, so in order to form a Demonstration, universal Propositions are more useful than particular ones, though the former consist of the latter, and these depend from the Senses.

Proclus makes use of a third Argument, which is, that if the Understanding receive its clearest and chiefest Ideas, from Matter and from sensible Things; Matter will have the Advantage over the Understanding, which is no more than if one should say

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that the Marble of which *Praxiteles* carv'd the Statue of *Venus*, was more noble than the Carver, because it contain'd that Statue which he did but chip out of it.

Des Cartes has taken a quite different Method; but one as uncertain as the former, if I am not much mistaken. For of three Kinds of Ideas he proposes, the first of which comes from without, as the Idea which we have of the Sun, which is come to me by seeing the Sun; the second which are fictitious and form'd within us, and by us, such as the Idea which an Astronomer has form'd to himself of the Sun, by Rint of Reason and Observation; and the third Sort which are natural and born with us, such as the Ideas we have of God, and of the first Principles of Geometry, of Essences and the like; of all these three Kinds of Ideas propos'd by *Cartesius*, I say, 'tis plain that the two former come from the Senses. As for the third, if we examine it more closely, we shall find that even according to *Des Cartes's* Reasoning, they may as well proceed from the Senses, as the two former. For since, according to him, those natural Ideas are the very Faculty of Thinking, which is in our Understanding, it follows that the Idea we have of God, is nothing else but the Faculty which is in us of forming Ideas concerning God; in the same manner as the other natural Ideas born with us, which are in our Understanding,

are nothing else but the Faculty, which is in us, of forming Ideas concerning any other Things.

BUT this thinking Faculty, let it be apply'd to whatever Subject we will, of which we can have any Notion, whether it be God, a Man, or the Sun, is still the same Faculty, just as the Faculty of Singing is still the same Faculty, whether we sing a Minuet, a Saraband, or a Rigadoon. Since therefore the Faculty which is in me of forming Ideas, whether of the Sun, or of a Man, that is, the Idea of the Sun or Man, which is in me, comes from without; the Idea I have within me of God, must consequently come likewise to me from without.

Des Cartes himself doth own, that there is no Difference between those Ideas, when he says, that the very Idea we have of the Sun, or of a Man, doth not come from without, but that our Understanding doth form them to himself, after it has been excited and shaken by certain corporeal Motions; and that we may with greater Reason affirm the same Things of those Ideas of Things, which are not form'd by our Understanding, after it has been agitated by such a corporeal Motion, such as are the Ideas of God, of Essences, of the Axioms of Geometry, &c. which *Des Cartes* cannot affirm without attributing the same Origin, and the same Nature, to the Ideas which come to us from without, and to those which he
calls

calls natural, and pretends to be born with us.

As for me, having found that some excellent Philosophers were fully persuaded that Human Understanding had been endow'd and adorn'd with all those Advantages, not by the Help of the Senses, but originally; I bestow'd a great deal of Time and Application, in Hopes to find out this hidden Treasure of my Understanding, and to discover those great Benefits I had receiv'd from Nature, from those which I had acquir'd, or were come to me from without; but with all the Diligence I could use, I could never find any Idea in me, but what plainly appear'd to me to have come from without, and to have proceeded from some external Object: Nay, I could plainly discover the very Way by which it found Entrance into my Understanding.

I fancied afterwards that I could judge of other Men's Understanding by my own; for I dare affirm that whoever shall be willing to divest himself of Self-love, and to enter without Prejudice into the most hidden Recesses of his Mind, shall find in it no Idea, but what is form'd from the Image of some outward Object.

THOSE who are of a contrary Opinion may ask me, whence I have the Idea of a Triangle; to which I answer, that it came to me from an infinite Number of Triangles which I have seen, from which I have

form'd to my self an obscure and confus'd Idea of one, which is not determin'd or circumscrib'd by any certain Bounds. If they ask whence I had the Idea of any Number, such as the Number Four for Instance; I answer that it came to me from a vast Multitude of Things which I have seen, and which were but Four in Number, such as the four Legs of a Horse, or the four Corners of a Square: Or I may perhaps have form'd it to my self by the meer Force of my Understanding, which could easily add two or more Things I have often seen, to any other Number, though I had never seen any four Things together, but only by adding to or subtracting from any known Number, and considering it either jointly or distinctly. If they question me, whence I had the Idea of Motion, I answer, That it is come to me from the several Motions which I have often seen in Bodies, whence it happen'd that my Understanding, abstracting the Motion from the Thing mov'd, hath form'd to it self a certain Idea of Motion; I cannot call it a clear, distinct and express Idea, but an obscure and confus'd one.

IF they ask, whence I had that Notion, that two Things equal to a third, are equal to one another; I answer, that it came to me from several Observations I have made of Things, which having been measured with, and agreeing to the same Measure, have been found to be equal among themselves

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Nay, my Understanding may easily form it to it self by its natural Power, by framing some imaginary Measure, to which it mentally applies two Things, and finding them equal to that Measure, it concludes that they are so among themselves. Hence is form'd in me that general and loose Notion, which is abstracted from all Kinds of external Objects; that whensoever any two Things agree to a third, they agree one to the other.

IF they should further ask, whence I have the Idea of God and incorporeal Things, *Thomas Aquinas* gives this excellent Answer to it; (Part I. *Quest.* 84. *Ans.* 7. and 8.) that *incorporeal Things, of which there is no Species, are known by Comparison to sensible Bodies, of which there are Species: Thus we know Truth by the Consideration of those Things in which we speculate the Truth.* He further adds, that we know God as the Cause of all Things *by excess and retrenching*, according to the Language of the Schools: And that whilst we are tied to these mortal Bodies, we cannot know all the other incorporeal Things but *by Retrenchment, and by comparing them to corporeal ones; and that for this Reason we must have Recourse to the Species of Bodies, though there be no Species in the incorporeal ones.*

BUT we have dwelt too long on this Subject, though it be a very material Point; there having been some wise Folks who have drawn many marvellous Consequences from this vain Fancy of natural and innate Ideas; but let us re-assume our Subject, said our Philosopher to me, unless you have some Objection to propose.

I have answer'd, nothing at present to object against your Hypothesis, that all our Conceptions have first pass'd, either wholly, or in part, through our Senses; for I only desire to know your Opinion, without being obliged to discover my own; go on therefore, I beseech you, and explain the Remainder to me; upon which he went on *thus*.

WE must therefore look upon it as certain, that Truth cannot be clearly known by us, and that how diligently and attentively soever we consider these Things, how probable, nay how evident soever they may appear; yet we ought not to give entire Credit to them, but still look upon them as doubtful and uncertain. It follows moreover, from what has been said, that those who apply themselves to the Search of such a plain and constant Truth, as shall not be obscur'd by any Doubt, do undertake a fruitless Task and lose their Labour; for such a kind of Truth is above the Reach of Human Understanding. Besides, we must remember what I said at the Beginning of this Discourse, concerning the several Degrees and

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different Kinds of Certitude; for we are now speaking of that supreme and entire Certitude, to which nothing is wanting that can raise it to the highest Degree of Perfection, such as neither our Reason nor our Senses can attain to, and which we shall never be able to enjoy, till we are united to God, who is the Fountain of Truth. Though I don't deny but that whilst we are ty'd to this mortal Body, our Understanding may attain to that high Degree of human Certitude, which, *though surrounded with the Darknes of Sin, and obscur'd with the Clouds of Humanity, as St. Austin speaks, (de Morib. Eccl. Cathol. cap. 2.)* may nevertheless cast, if not a fixed and intent, yet at least a lively and piercing Eye towards that supreme Truth. Thus, though I cannot, from the *Lybian Promontory of Sicily*, perfectly discern and number all the Vessels which sail out of *Carthage*, yet when I draw nearer to them, I may be able to tell them; and though I cannot with my naked Eye behold the glorious Sun, yet I can look upon the Moon and the Stars. Our Understanding is the Eye of the Soul; Truth is a Sun, whose shining Rays it cannot behold, unless they be temper'd either by Reflexion or Refraction, or by the Interposition of some Medium which adapts and fits them to our Weakness.





C H A P. IV.

In the common Offices of Life we ought to follow the most probable Things, as if they were true and certain.

BUT our Design is not, therefore, to extinguish all the Light of the Mind, neither do we believe that our Understanding is in a continual Error, or that we are become like the Trunks of Trees fasten'd to the Earth, and covered with the deepest Ignorance of all Things, void of Thought, and destitute of all Rule for the Conduct of our Lives, not knowing in what Posture we ought to keep our selves; as some Persons, who are either ignorant or ill informed of our Tenents, do often object. For though we do not walk by the full Light of the Sun, we go at least by that Light of his, which is reflected to us by the Moon; and though we are not bless'd with a sure Knowledge of the Truth, we enjoy, however, some Probabilities at least.

BUT when I say, that some Things appear true to us, I do not thereby affirm that they are really so; for it is one Thing to appear,

appear, and another to be. Nay, I don't so much as affirm that those Things appear true to us; I only say that it seems so to me, for as I say that That which is likely is uncertain, so I say, that the Idea of it is so likewise. So that when I say that a Thing seems probable to me, the very Thing I say is *subject* to the same Law of Incertitude. Now those Likelihoods and Probabilities are what we ought to follow in the common Offices of Life for Want of Truth, whether it be when the natural Inclination of our Understanding or Senses doth induce us to it, or when we are forc'd to it by the common Wants of Nature, such as Hunger, Thirst, and the like; or when we follow the Laws and Customs, or when we are obliged to exercise those Arts which are necessary for the Preservation of Life. We ought on the contrary to reject, as false, whatever has neither Probability nor Likelihood; lest we should remain in a State of Inactivity, or rather lest we should become like Blocks or Stones.

WHEN therefore we are ask'd whether we grant that Men may frame any *Opinions*, we only desire that the Word *Opinion* may be purg'd from any wrong Acception it may have: For Men call Opinion the Assent which one may give to doubtful Things, in the Studies and Disputes of Philosophy, and the affirming of a Thing as certain which is doubtful, all which Kinds of *Opinion*

nion a wise Man ought to cast away. And here it is that the Saying of *Theognis* is very applicable, that *Opinion is a great Evil among Men, but that Experience on the contrary is a most useful Thing*. For when the Question is about Truth, the chief and best Rule is not to give our Assent and Credit too lightly and inconsiderately, and never to affirm any Thing rashly; but if by *Opinion* be meant the determining and resolving to follow that which is most probable in the common Uses of Life, we are far from being against it.


WE must make the like Distinction in the Words Credit, Assent and Consent, which if Men would do, they would have terminated many great Contests, which have given a great deal of Trouble to the old *Academicks*. We ought therefore to apply the same Care and Diligence in the discerning of probable Things, that others would have Men use in their Search after Truth; and as other Philosophers do regulate their Lives by what they believe to be true, so we will regulate ours by what appears to us most probable; and not be *Zereticks*, i. e. *Searchers*, but in order to find out that which is most probable.



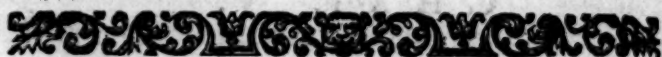


C H A P. V.

A Rule or Criterium of Probability.


S the *Dogmatists* have a *Criterium* or Rule of Truth, in order to discern Truth from Falshood, whether it be the Senses, the Understanding or both; so have we likewise a Rule of Probability to distinguish Things probable from those which are not so. What I have said before, is sufficient to make you understand that there are two, the one near, and the other remote; the first is the Order and Disposition of the Fibres of the Brain, the Form of those Traces which either the Nerves or animal Spirits, shaken by the outward Objects by Means of the Senses, have impress'd on the Brain; and the Ideas that have been produc'd thereby. For the Understanding, perceiving those Traces and Ideas, forms a Judgment about their Cause, their Origine and Signification, and makes a proper Estimate of the Species of Things; on which Probability depends. The remote Rule of Probability is the Senses, which, being shaken by external Objects, do imprint certain Traces on the Brain, by Means

Means of the Nerves and animal Spirits, which being perceiv'd by the Understanding, it makes a Judgment on the external Objects.



CHAP. VI.

What End we propose to our selves in this Art of doubting.

HAVING propos'd, in the foregoing Chapter, the Rule of Truth, by which our Doctrine is guided, we must next explain its End, by which I mean the Mark to which all the Parts of a System refer, and the ultimate End of all that we desire to attain by such a System. This System has likewise two Ends, one near, and the other remote. The first is to shun Error, Obstinacy and Arrogance, and the other is to prepare the Mind for the Reception of Faith. For since God has created us to love and to serve him in this Life, and to enjoy eternal Felicity after Death, the Doctrine, I am now establishing, doth afford us in both these very considerable Helps. For God has given us from our very Birth a great Desire after Happiness; there never being any Man, but what desir'd to be happy. And for as much as the Knowledge of Truth

Truth is Part of this Happiness, insomuch that some Philosophers, and they no despicable ones, have made the chief and ultimate Good to consist in the Attainment of Knowledge; so we likewise feel in our selves a great Desire after Truth, and are naturally drawn to the Search of it.

BUT because this mortal Life is not capable of Happiness, so neither is it of Truth. We have only a natural Inclination towards the Knowledge of it, and this Desire is as 'twere a Spur, which heightens our Desires, and quickens our Search after that Happiness, in which the perfect Knowledge of Truth consists. For Happiness consists in the Vision of God, who is the immense and eternal Source of Truth: 'Tis therefore to keep up and quicken this Desire after Knowledge, that he has as it were hid in our Minds some Sparks or Embers, that is, a faint and doubtful Knowledge, insufficient, indeed, to bring us to the perfect Knowledge of Truth, and to a perfect and full Evidence of Things; but yet sufficient for the Conduct of our Lives; that Man, being thereby apprised of his Weakness and Ignorance, might come to mistrust his own Reason, shun Error, and be prevented from rashly judging of, inconsiderately assenting to, or arrogantly affirming any Thing; be enabled to shake off all Obstinacy; and having once for all discover'd what small Helps his Reason afforded him towards the Attainment of Truth,

Truth, might thereby be more strongly engag'd to find out some more useful Means.

NOW this Means is Faith, by which a Man whilst he lives here acquires some Knowledge of God and heavenly Things; and after Death having obtain'd Happiness, he comes to enjoy a perfect Knowledge of Truth. For as the Apostle tells us, (1 Cor. xlii. 9. 10. 12.) *We know but in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away: for now we see as through a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face*: But Faith is the Gift of God, which he vouchsafes to those who do not rely too much upon the Strength of Nature, nor presume too much upon the Penetration of their Reason, nor too obstinately adhere to their own Opinions, but take a great deal of Care and Pains to prepare their Minds to receive that excellent Gift: This is the Effect which the Art of doubting, we are now establishing, produces.

CLEAVING therefore to Things probable for Want of true ones, let us make use of this obscure and imperfect Knowledge which God has given us, and which is sufficient for the Conduct of our Life, and is chiefly useful to us, in subjecting our Understandings to the Dictates of Faith. Let us likewise use this imperfect Knowledge in our Study of Philosophy, lest we should take those Things for known and certain, which

which are uncertain and unknown, and lest we should fall into Errors, which it is shameful not to shun when we have it in our Power to do it.



C H A P VII.

We ought not to be fond of any Author's Opinion.

ET us above all take Care that we do not cleave to the Sentiments of any Author, or engage our selves in any Party or Sect, especially those of the *Dogmatists*, who fancying, that they can attain to a certain and indubitable Knowledge of Truth by the Help of Reason, do err in the Principles, and stumble at the very Threshold of Philosophy. Neither ought we so far to engage our selves in that of the *Scepticks* and *Academicks*, but that we shall be ready to abandon them when ever there is Occasion; but carefully weighing every Thing in the Scales of Reason, let us still preserve an entire Liberty of thinking and speaking in all Matters of Philosophy whatsoever.

FOR as *Arcefilas* did alter the System of *Pyrrho*, and *Carneades* that of *Arcefilas*, *Philo* that of *Carneades*, and *Antiochus* that

that of *Philo*; it is but just we should claim the same Right. We forsake, for Instance, the *Academicks* and *Scepticks*; because they make Profession of searching after Truth, and of examining every Thing, and considering it all manner of Ways in order to find it out, which has given them the Appellation of *Zereticks*. For what Truth have they been able to find out by such a long and assiduous Search? They ought rather to have said that they endeavour'd to shun Error and Falshood, instead of pretending to search after Truth; for a Man shuns Error and Falshood by suspending his Judgment, his Belief and Assent; this indeed is in our Power; but 'tis not in our Power to attain to a clear and perfect Knowledge of Truth, as I have already shewn: For to seek after that which cannot be found, is an Undertaking altogether frivolous and vain.

WE do moreover depart from the Sentiments of the *Scepticks* in several Things, but especially in what relates to the End of Happiness, which they make to consist in a fix'd and constant State of the Soul, which is subject to no Trouble as to those Things which depend upon Opinion; which they call *Ataraxia*, and which in those Things which are not in our Power, but are forc'd upon us, they call *Metriopathia*, that is, Moderation and Constancy to bear them. But we make the End of Happiness to consist

sist in shunning Error, Obstinacy and Ignorance, and in preparing our Minds for the Reception of Faith.



C H A P. VIII.

We ought to choose what appears best to us in every Sect.

WITHOUT therefore adhering to any one Sect, let us examine them all, and pick out for our Use whatsoever has any Appearance of Truth, and without minding who it is that has said any Thing, let us only mind what has been said; and if by our own Industry we can light upon any Thing that is useful, let us cleave to it, yet without throwing away our own Goods, or ever departing from that supreme Law of doubting; but so as to be always ready to reject what we had before approv'd, as soon as we find any Thing that is more probable; always preserving an entire Freedom of judging, without subjecting our selves to any Necessity, or to any Authority whatsoever.





C H A P. IX.

That we ought above all Things to be very careful not to admit any Thing that is contrary to Faith.



HERE is one material Thing which we ought above all Things to be careful of, which is, that we admit nothing that is contrary to revealed Religion: We ought to hold for certain and indubitable whatever God has written in the Soul by Faith, which is the Guide and Mistress of our Reason; and to look upon every Thing else as doubtful and uncertain, which our Reason discovers or teacheth us.





C H A P. X.

*The Sect of the Eclecticks has been embrac'd
by very great Men.*

HOWEVER, in this free and dis-
engaged Method of Philosophy,
and of running over all the Sects
of it, we do but follow the Exam-
ple of several very learned Men, especially of
Plato, who form'd his Sect from the Do-
ctrines of *Pythagoras*, *Epicharmes*, *Par-
menides*, *Heraclitus*, and of *Socrates*, which
last has enrich'd it with the Doctrines of the
Egyptians; for he learn'd of *Pythagoras*
the Method of applying Numbers and Geo-
metrical Demonstrations to natural Things,
and to examine the Nature of those Things
which our Understanding conceives: He
learned of *Heraclitus* to examine the Na-
ture of our Sensations; he took from *Epi-
charmes* the Doctrine of Ideas: He took
from *Socrates* his Morals, Politicks and
Economicks; and from the *Egyptians* the
Method of explaining his Doctrines by
Fictions and Fables.

THOUGH *Cicero* sets up for an Aca-
demick, he now and then takes a Turn in-

to the Schools of other Philosophers, and from them he takes and appropriates to himself whatever he likes, for he is likewise desirous to pass for a *Socratick* and a *Platonick* Philosopher; sometimes he sticks to the Doctrines of the Stoicks, and sometimes entirely to his own. *Horace* (*Carm. Lib. i. Od. 34. & Epist. Lib. i. Epist. 1.*) is not such a strict Follower of *Aristippus* and *Epicurus*, but he sometimes turns Peripatetic or Stoick, without adhering to any of them. *Seneca* openly declares (*Epist. 16. 21. 33. 46. 80. & de Otio. Sap. cap. 30.*) that he will adhere to no Man; that he will not take the Name of any Sect; that he pays great Deference to the Judgment of great Men, and likewise some to his own; that he follows his own Way; that he follows himself; that he leaves himself to himself, in order to find something new, to change, to amend, or to forsake: That he doth not slavishly follow those that went before him, but that he only gives his Assent to them.

IF any Man therefore has said any Thing to the Purpose, he lays hold on it, and applies it to his own Use. He affirms that we ought to do the same Thing in Philosophy, which we do in the Senate-house, where when any one proposes his own Opinion, Part of which we like, and the other not, we generally split the Advice, and only take what we like: For to engage one self inseparably to any Man, would not be

be an Association, but rather a Faction. He despises those devoted Philosophers, who still keep close to the Steps of others, and never follow their own, in a Search of such Importance, as that we are now speaking of, I mean the Search of Truth; which Men are still looking for, but will never be able to find, especially if they content themselves with what has been already discover'd. He doth not forbid Mens walking in an old beaten Road, but would have us whenever we find a smoother one to follow it; so that though he had taken the Party of the Stoicks, he very often forsakes them and turns Epicurean.

I cannot forbear mentioning *Origen*, who was wont to run through all the Schools of Philosophy, and to bring home some fresh Plunder (*Orig. Lib. 2. cap. 1. § 4.*) he did in this follow the Practice of *Clemens Alexandrinus* his Master, who was of Opinion, that the only Sect which deserv'd the Name of a Philosopher, was not that which claims *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Epicurus* or *Zeno* for its Author, but that which lays hold on what is best in any of them, (*Clem. Alex. Strom. Lib. i.*) which Sect is call'd *Eclectic*.

Lactantius is of the same Opinion, (*Lact. Lib. vii. cap. 7.*) he declares that he will follow those who shall collect the Truth which is scatter'd among the different Sects, and reduce it into one Body; but that this can never be done, but by a Man that has

the Knowledge of Truth; which Knowledge none can have, but he who is taught by God. He sharply reproves those who, having attach'd themselves to a Sect, rejected all others as vain and false, and blindly opposed all the Arguments of their Adversaries.

THAT Sect of *Physick* which is call'd *Methodical*, and comes very near to the Doctrine of the *Scepticks*, has had some Followers, who, according to the Testimony of *Sextus Empiricus*, made Profession of being *Eclecticicks*, of which Number was *Archigenes* and *Apameus*. The new *English* Royal Society of Philosophers, which has produced so many excellent Men, doth condemn the Arrogance of the *Dogmatists*, and, without adhering to any Sect, doth wholly apply it self to find out and cultivate all the best Things that any Sect hath hitherto taught, or to discover something that is better, and more worthy to be followed by those that come after, than what had been left by those that went before. If we add to this List all those who never would cleave to any Sect, but would still reserve to themselves the Liberty of making some Excursions into others, in order to plunder them of their choicest Tenents, the Number would be almost infinite.

BUT one may object, against this Method, the Contradiction that is found among those many collected Opinions. For as they

they are extracted from different Principles, it seems impossible they should agree together; but I would be understood of a Choice that shall begin by the very Principles themselves; for after these are once settled, we shall never admit any Opinions but what are exactly agreeable to them; if any one, for Instance, should admit a *vacuum* with *Democritus*, it would be ridiculous for him to maintain with *Cartesius*, that the Nature of Bodies consists in Length, Breadth, Depth and Extension.

A Man would be guilty of a very gross Mistake, who should think that *Potamon* or any of the *Eclectic* Sect, of which he was the Founder, were such inconsiderate Fools, to embrace such repugnant and contradictory Opinions. He had form'd a certain System, the Elements of which he had collected in a small Book; but can any one doubt but that he found some Relation or Agreement between the Parts of that System? We ought to think the same of the other *Eclecticks*, who have been so circumspect in this Matter, that they would not even admit all the Opinions of *Potamon*, but only receiv'd his Method of taking what they found best in every one. For my part, tho' I highly approve of this Method, I do not therefore set up for a *Potamonician* or *Eclectic*, for that would be to adhere to one Sect, which I would shun above all Things,
lest

lest I should deprive my self of my Liberty of thinking.

BESIDES, 'tis very likely that *Potamon* was a *Dogmatist*, which we may gather from this; that those, who have collected the principal Heads of his System, do not mention any, that doth in the least agree with those Sects, which establish the Law of doubting. And you'll scarce find one of the *Eclecticks* that ever adher'd either to the *Scepticks* or *Academicks*: In a Word, there are many Points in which I differ both from *Potamon*, and from all the other *Eclecticks*.



CHAP. XI.

Since we must not adhere either to the Academick, Sceptick, Eclectick, or to any other Sect; we ought to stick close to our own.



IF any Man ask me what I am, since I will be neither *Academick* nor *Sceptick*, nor *Eclectick*, nor of any other Sect; I answer, that I am of my own Opinion, that is to say, free, neither submitting my Mind to any Authority, nor approving

approving of any Thing but what seems to me to come nearest the Truth ; and if any Man should either ironically or flatteringly call us *Idiaγγωμονας*, that is, Men who stick only to their own Sentiments, we shall never go about to hinder it.

The End of the second Book.





BOOK III.

*Wherein all the Objections of our
Adversaries are fairly stated,
and fully answer'd.*



C H A P. I.

*Object. 1. That our Method takes away
the common Uses of Life.*



Would not have my Friends, the Philosophers, believe that I quietly and basely yielded my self to this whimsical Doctrine, or that I cowardly betray'd the Cause of true Philosophy by a shameful Silence; on the contrary I warmly took the Part of the *Dogmatists*, and I am willing to give you an Account of this Conversation. For our Provençal Gen:

Gentleman thinking that he had exhausted this Matter, and settled his System beyond all Contradiction, and that I was fully convinc'd; was going to put an End to his Dispute in the following Terms. You have now heard the Discourse of a Man, who doth not seem over and above modest, having dar'd in your Presence to set my self up, not only for a Judge and Arbitrator, but even for a Censor and Reformer, among so many able and learned Philosophers. But it was what you desir'd, and I was oblig'd to obey you; and I think my self guilty of a less Fault, in engaging my self to examine all these cramp and difficult Questions with you, than if I had been wanting to that Love and Respect which I profess for you, by refusing to satisfy your Desires in this Matter.

I can assure you, Sir, said I to him, that you have done me a great and a sensible Pleasure, for you have div'd into such learn'd Enquiries, as have agreably instructed me; but don't expect to be quite rid of this Business, which you was pleas'd to undertake at my Desire; for now you have whole Drovers of *Dogmatists* to combat with, Men who are, generally speaking, very perverse and untractable, whose Assaults, I am much afraid, you will hardly be able to bear. The first Pass they make at you, you have indeed foreseen, but you seem not to have quite shunn'd it. They will tell you
that

that, since your Philosophy doth not suffer us to stick to the Testimony of the Senses, it obscures the Understanding, confounds Truth with Falshood, and robs Man of his own Approbation and Judgment; it follows that it *quite overturns the whole State of Life*, to use *Tertullian's* Words, (*de Anim. cap. 17.*) that it disturbs the Order of Nature, and so wholly takes away all Manner of Action, that no Man has so much as the Freedom to stir.



C H A P. II.

Object. 2. *That we do deprive our selves of Knowledge by it.*



WE follow, say you, the Customs, we obey the Laws of the Country, we suffer our selves to be carried along by the Motions of other Men, lest we should remain immoveable and fix'd to the Earth like the Roots of Trees; but you deprive your selves of that Knowledge which is the clearest Light of the Mind, without leaving one single Spark to help you to see the Truth. This seems to be the chief Cause why

why the *Pyrrhonian* Sect was in Process of Time quite extinct, and rejected by the very *Pagans*; for a Man cannot admit of it without renouncing all other Sciences, and that is the Reason why we have seen so few learn'd Men come out of the Schools of the *Scepticks*, or even from the modern Academy, which I agree with you was a real *Pyrrhonism*.



C H A P. III.

Object. 3. *That we have the Criterium or Rule to discern Truth from Falshood.*



N EITHER is what you said before, that for Want of Truth, you follow'd Probabilities, any more satisfactory; for if you grant that there is in Things some Appearance or some Mark of Truth, which you think you may follow, you must be forc'd to own that you have some Rule to discern Truth from Falshood: For what is this Appearance or Mark of Truth, but that which makes the Discernment between Truth and Falshood? And if once I get you to own that there is
any

any Rule to discern Truth from Falshood, there is of course an open Access to Truth.

SEE now what the Consequence of this will be, when you find some Probability or Appearance of Truth in any Thing, which obliges you to say that such a Thing is probable or likely, you conceive and understand that that Thing is probable, and affirm afterwards that you did understand and know it to be so, you follow it in the Uses of Life, and consequently you give your Assent and Credit to it: And when you say that some Things are probable and likely, but that there is nothing true or certain, you affirm this very Thing as true: For if you say it is false, I desire nothing else, and you need not to look for an Answer.

WHY then do you maintain that we can comprehend nothing, or why are you against affirming any Thing, since it is plain that you both comprehend and affirm? You see therefore, that your Darknes and Doubts are dispers'd, that the Foundations of Sciences do still stand sure and firm, and that there is an End at once of all the Quirks and Subtilties of the *Academicks* and *Scepticks*.





C H A P. IV.

Object. 4. *That our Method of philosophising produces no Sect.*



HERE is still another Thing which is no small Reproach to your Method of philosophising, *viz.* That it doth not make it self into a Body, that it has no real System of Doctrines, but that being unsettled, wandering and uncertain, fixing to nothing, being without Principles, and at Enmity with all other Sects; it dares not usurp the Name of one, since it denies it to all the rest.



C H A P. V.

Object. 5. *That when we say that there is nothing either true or false, or that there is no Demonstration, we do condemn our selves.*



BESIDES, you, that lay Snares for all other Philosophers, do intangle your self in a Net, out of which all the Industry of Man cannot extricate you, for when you say that there is nothing true or false which the Mind of Man is able to comprehend,

hend, that very Thing is either true or false. If true, then 'tis plain there is something true; if it is false, you are strangely out of the Way in advancing a Thing that is false. You likewise fall into a Labyrinth when you affirm, that there is no Demonstration; for either, the Arguments you make use of do prove it, or they do not: If they prove it, you must own that there are some Demonstrations, since to prove by Argument, isto demonstrate. If they prove not, you will still be forc'd to own that there are some Demonstrations, since you vainly undertook to prove the contrary.



C H A P. VI.

Object. 6. *That, we cannot, without Impiety, suppose that God may have made Man so as that he shall be always deceiv'd.*

HERE is still another Battery rais'd against you, *viz.* that if God had made Man of such a Nature, that he should be always deceiv'd, even in those Things which appear'd to him most evident, as *Cartesius* has advanc'd it; it would follow that God himself would be the Deceiver, which no Man that has any Fear

Fear of God, and is in his Senses, much less so wise a Man as you are, would dare to suppose, for *God is the Fulness of Truth*; he is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, and so far is he from having form'd Man in such a Manner, that he shall still deceive himself; *that he enlightens every Man that cometh into the World*, Joh. i. 14. and xiv. 6.



C H A P. VII.

Object. 7. *That the Law of doubting seems to hinder Man's Submission to the Christian Faith, and to encourage the Corruption of Manners.*

ASTLY, this Method of doubting, of suspending one's Judgment, and never assenting to any Thing; which Method you think so proper to captivate our Minds to the Truths of Faith, seems on the contrary to alienate them from it; for what can be more repugnant to that Submission which we owe to Faith, than to refuse to give Credit to the most evident Things? What Man will ever willingly submit himself to the Mysteries of Faith, which are obscure, and so much above our Senses and our Reason, who has

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by a long Custom and Exercise, us'd his Mind to resist the Testimony of his Senses, and the Force of his Reason.

Tertullian doth speak of it like a wise Man (*de Anim. cap. 7.*) *What art thou doing, presumptuous Academick? Thou overturnest the whole State of Life, and disturbest the whole Order of Nature; thou makest God's Providence to be blind, who in order to render his Works intelligible and habitable, and to dispense them to us, and make us able to enjoy them, has made them depend upon such lying and deceitful Senses.* Afterwards he says, *We can never be allow'd to doubt of the Fidelity of our Senses, for fear we should come to do the same in what concerns Christ; and say that he only fancied that he saw Satan tumbling down from Heaven; or that he did hear wrong, when the Father gave him this Testimony; this is my beloved Son, &c.* We find the same Language in *St. Austin*, (*Enchir. ad Laur. cap. 20. & de Civit Dei lib. 19. cap. 18.*) when he says: *If you take away the Assent, you also take away Faith, for we believe nothing without assenting to it.* And in another Place speaking of the *Academicks*, who look upon all Things as uncertain: *The City of God*, says he, *abhors such a Method of doubting as extravagant, having, in those Things which it comprehends by the Help of the Understanding and Reason, some Knowledge, small indeed,*

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(by reason of the Body's over-burthening the Soul: For as the Apostle says, we see but in part) but yet very sure and certain; it gives Credit to the Senses, in the Evidence of every Thing, which the Understanding uses, by Means of the Body: As for those who pretend that we ought never to trust to them, these fall into an Error, which is much more worthy of Compassion.

THEREFORE the Fathers of the Church were, certainly, very much in the Right, to undertake the Protection of Reason against the *Academicks*. For if Reason is not to be hearken'd to, this fundamental Principle that *God is*, upon which Reason doth found the Christian Religion, will be overthrown; and those first Principles which we know by the Light of Nature, and on which our Faith depends, such as these; that the same Thing cannot be and not be, at the same Time, that the same Thing cannot be this, and any other Thing at the same Time; that a Proposition cannot be both true and false, or be believ'd and disbeliev'd at the same Time; these natural principles, I say, will become uncertain.

ALL our Theological Conclusions, will likewise be uncertain, if these two Propositions, from which they flow, be not certain, even with a divine Certitude; for if either of the Two has none but a human Certainty, or be only known by the Light of Nature; the Conclusion, which, according to the Language of the School, still

follows the weaker of the two Propositions, shall have only a human Certitude; let us take, for Instance, this Conclusion, Jesus Christ is a rational Creature, which is drawn from these two Propositions, Every Man is a rational Creature; Jesus Christ is a Man: The first of these Propositions has only a human Certainty, but the second is certain with a divine Certitude.

THE Motives of Credibility, which propose to us the Mysteries of Faith as credible, will lose their Energy and Effects. For if they do not appear credible, with Certitude and Evidence, but only with Probability, our Will, 'tis plain, will be carried towards a Thing unknown, and our Mind will imprudently believe, and not without Fear of being in an Error. Our Faith, being thus shaken, will be attended with a Corruption of Manners; for that Man, that believes that there is nothing either true or false, will also easily think that there is nothing either good or evil; and how shall he, whose Mind is prepossess'd with such an Error, refrain himself from falling into downright Libertinism; this is another, and perhaps the chief Reason which oblig'd the Christians wholly to reject the *Pyrrhonian* Sect, as being destructive of Faith, and corrupting our Morals. This likewise oblig'd St. *Austin*, a great Defender of Truth and Piety, whose Testimony I lately quoted, to oppose the *Academicks*, after

he became a Christian, whose Sentiments he had follow'd whilst he was a *Pagan*. 'Tis your Business therefore to see how you can bring your self off of all these Difficulties, which to me seem none of the easiest to be resolved.



C H A P. VIII.

Answering the Objections of our Adversaries.

§§§§ S for me, reply'd our Provençal,
 § A § I don't find that those Difficulties
 § § § are so puzzling, as they seem to
 you; but, before I undertake to
 answer them, give me Leave to point
 to you one Advantage which our Philosophy has above all others, *viz.* that it is still confirm'd by those Objections which overthrow the others; for it shews the Obscurity and Uncertainty of Things, the Weakness of our Judgment, and how equally weighry the contrary Reasons are in every Thing; since in those very Things, which we dare not advance without Hesitation and Uncertainty, we are not shelter'd from Contradictions, insomuch that it is impossible for us to know, or be ignorant of, any Thing with any Certainty.

ANOTHER Thing I must acquaint you with is, that you must not expect any greater Advantage from your Objections, than those who, having attack'd the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* with an Infinity of Disputes, have at last been forced to own that they had got nothing by the Bargain. For *Plutarch* tells us, (*Contr. Colot.*) that this Doctrine had indeed been warmly attack'd by very eminent Philosophers, and with an Infinity of Volumes, and yet that it came off still untouched and unhurt, and had still preserv'd it self whole and entire; but in order experimentally to convince you of this, I must now come to examine your Objections.



C H A P. IX.

Answer to the first Objection.

YO U alledge in the first Place, that we strip Man of his Senses, that we blind his Understanding, confound Truth and Falshood, and that we do consequently overthrow all the Offices of Life. This is an old thread-bare Complaint, which has been often exploded by the *Academicks* and *Scepticks*, who answer'd, as I told you before, that it is one Thing to live, and another to philosophize.

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WHEN therefore the Question is about the Conduct of our Lives, and the Performance of our Duty, we cease to be Philosophers, to be Opponents, doubtful or uncertain; and become poor, simple, credulous Idiots; we call Things by their Names, and re-assume our Understanding and Manners; we conform our Manners to those of other Men, and to their Laws and Customs. I who, a while ago, doubted whether I did exist, or whether there were any more Men, do now banish all those Thoughts, and as if I was sure both of my own and other Men's Existence: I eat and drink, I visit my Friends, I show my Respects to them, and entertain them: I affirm and deny that this is true, or that is false; for as Cicero tells us, (*Offic. Lib. ii.*) *There is a vast Difference between the Subtlety with which Men seek after Truth in their Disputes; and that with which a Man adapts his Discourse to the common Opinion.*

BUT you will say, that this very Thing ought to have wrought our Conviction, since we find our selves convinced by Experience, and by the Use of that Certitude of Things which you before doubted of, so that this Necessity brings you out of your whimsical Errors, into the right Way again. But you ought to consider that it is a very common Thing for us to enjoy the Use and Benefit of several Things, as if they were true,

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though we know them to be uncertain, or even entirely false.

ASTRONOMERS have invented several Orbits and Descriptions of the heavenly Bodies, which they call Systems or Hypotheses, which they neither believe true, nor publish as such; for 'tis indeed impossible they should be all true, the System of *Copernicus* being different from that of *Ticho*; and the one destroying the other. Every one of them however doth happily enough apply his own Hypothesis, to explain the Motions of the Planets, to foretel the Eclipses of the Sun and Moon, and the like: We know, that That which is suppos'd as certain in Astronomy, and in all solar Quadrants, concerning the Earth's being but one single Point, is manifestly false.

'TIS likewise plain, that in that Part which we call *Analytica*, we are wont to suppose, as true and known, the Thing which we seek, though it be unknown; and that by that we come to the Knowledge of what we look for. How many Men take great Pains in laying up the Helps and Comforts against old Age, though they cannot be sure that they shall ever arrive to it? And would not a Traveller, who doth not know what Way he is to take, be very silly, if instead of going forward, he should stop and sit still in some Corner of the Road?



C H A P. X.

Answer to the second Objection.

IN your next Objection, you charge **I** us with extinguishing the Light of Knowledge, and casting the Mists of profoundest Ignorance over our Minds. Can you tell me nothing, but what has been said so many hundred Times? I expected something new and more clever from you. However, to your superannuated Argument I shall give this Answer, which is no vain one, but has been often us'd by me, which is, that you unreasonably charge us with that which is Nature's Fault, if we may say that Nature can be guilty of any.

Is the Philosopher, who call'd Man a Bubble, the Cause of his being so? Or if I say that he cannot behold the Sun, am I answerable for the Weakness of his Eye-sight? But hear what *Seneca* says (*de Benef. Lib. vii. cap. i.*) *Truth* says he, *lies deeply hid, and yet we ought not to complain of the Malignity of Nature, seeing that nothing is hard to be discover'd but those Things, the Discovery of which brings no other Fruit, but that of their having been discover'd; but whatever can make us either better or happier, Nature has placed before us, or nigh us.*

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He was therefore very much in the wrong to complain in another Place, (*Senec. Epist.* 88.) that that Philosophy, which teaches us to doubt, doth afford us no Light to guide our Minds to the Knowledge of Truth, but that it only plucks its own Eyes out; for so far is it from putting your Eyes out, that it makes you sensible of your own Blindness, who think your selves so very sharp-sighted, Neither can you say, that he, who calls a Mole blind, doth pluck its Eyes out. If you are pleas'd with your own vain Opinion, or take Delight in being flatter'd, or if you would be thought to know what you don't; enjoy your Error, and much Good may it do you; but then give us Leave to be ignorant of what we know nothing of. It will never make us slacken our Pursuit of Arts and Sciences the more; we shall never the more forswear Labour, and the Study of Literature: For whilst you cultivate them with the vain Hopes of coming to the Knowledge of Truth, we shall only cultivate them in Hopes of finding out what is most probable, and likely to be true.

WILL you, can you, tax so many excellent Philosophers, so great a Number of whom we have muster'd up against the *Dogmatists*, with Laziness and Indolence. If we do them Justice, we must acknowledge that they have been the Authors and Founders of most Arts and Sciences. It was not therefore for fear of becoming ignorant, that

that those high swoln Philosophers rejected the Sects of *Arcefilas*, *Carneades*, and *Pyrrho*; but rather lest they should be forced to own their Ignorance; to this we may add, that as we don't stick to any Sect, but only follow what is most probable, we are under an Obligation to weigh the Arguments of our Opponents, as the Practice of the *Academicks* is, and this cannot be done without great Study and Erudition. Whereas the *Dogmatists*, applying themselves only to know the Nature, Constitution, and Arguments of their own Sect, never trouble themselves about the rest; this is the Way of the greatest Part of our Modern *Peripatetick* Professors.

AFTER they have once learn'd this Method of Philosophy, which is taught in the Schools, and which is reduc'd into Precepts, adapted to the Capacity of their Disciples, they little care what either *Plato*, *Epicurus*, or *Zeno* thought: They do not so much as trouble themselves with reading *Aristotle*; neither do they enquire whether the *Peripatetick* Doctrine, which they pretend to teach, be the very Doctrine of the *Peripateticks*. *Epicurus* himself, after he had contented himself with new Plaistering up the Doctrine of *Democritus*, did not so much despise other Sciences, as he pretended it, in order to hide his own Ignorance; alledging, that they were of no Use towards the Attainment of true Knowledge; though
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Nausiphanes, who taught him Philosophy, and had been a Disciple of *Pyrrho*, was a very learned Man; and since then, many *Academicks* and *Scepticks* have attain'd to a very high Degree of Learning.

As for *Des Cartes*, though he took a great Deal of Pain to acquaint himself with the Philosophy of the Ancients, and of many of the Moderns, he, nevertheless, affected to appear as if he had known nothing of 'em; that he might the better pass for the sole Inventor of his own Doctrine, in which he has been follow'd by too many of his Disciples, who have expos'd a counterfeit Ignorance, in order to hide their real one. And yet these Defenders of Ignorance, these Enemies to Learning, (whose Works do but too plainly show, how, much they deserve those Names) do not cease singing the same old Song against the *Academicks*, and accusing them of the profoundest Ignorance, because, say they, by the Profession they make of knowing nothing, they own themselves the most ignorant of all Men, as if their owning, that they knew nothing, made the others one Jot the wiser.

BUT these very attentive Philosophers, who, at every Word throughout their Works, do still beg our Attention, should have consider'd that the Word to *know* is equivocal, and that there is a great Deal of Difference between knowing a Thing with full Evidence, and perfect Certitude, and knowing it,

it only with Probability; and that the *Academicks* have as much of this last Knowledge, as any other Men, but that no Man can attain to the former. They tell the World that the *Academicks* do affect to pass for Men that doubt of every Thing, even of the most evident Things, only to gain the Reputation of Men of Sense and Learning. Was it then to be thought, Men of Sense, that *Des Cartes*, and his Disciples after him, would have Men to rid themselves of all those Opinions, with which their Minds are pre-possess'd, which they call Prejudices, in order to their coming at the Truth: But we may easily see, both by this Reproach which they cast upon us, and by all their Works, that they never had so much as a Tincture of polite Learning; and that they never understood what the Opinions of the *Scepticks* or *Academicks* were.





C H A P X I.

Answer to the Third Objection.

LET us now come to your Third Objection, by which you would persuade us that we see what we don't, I mean, Truth and Falshood, and that we can discern them by some certain, distinguishing Marks. It is certainly a most surprising Thing to me, that you should know what I see, when I my self don't know it. I say, indeed, that there is in Things an Appearance of Truth which we do follow, but 'tis your self that conclude from thence that we have a Rule to distinguish between Truth and Falshood, because that Appearance of Truth is what makes us discern it from Falshood: For that Appearance of Truth is not a certain Mark of Truth, which, being perceiv'd, should make us know that That, which bears it, is certainly true, but only an outward Appearance, which, being perceiv'd in any Object, makes us say not that it is true, since that Appearance of Truth is sometimes found in Falshood; but only that we find a Probability or Appearance of Truth in it.

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FOR as *Zeuxis*, when he beheld the Curtain, which *Parrhasius* had painted, was deceiv'd by its Likeness, and thought it a real one; if, after he had found his Mistake, he should have seen a real Curtain hanging over a Picture, he would certainly have doubted whether it was a real or a painted one, and would have thought that it only had the Likeness of a Curtain, whether true or painted, till he had examin'd it more narrowly. In like manner we, often observing an Appearance of Truth in some Things, which we know to have no Truth in them, whenever that Appearance of Truth presents it self to us again, we ought, if we act like Wise-men, to believe that there is the Likeness or Appearance of Truth, but not the real Truth; and that such a Likeness may as well come from Falshood as from Truth; this Appearance therefore is far enough from being a Rule to distinguish Truth from Falshood, since we have discover'd it to be common to them both; we resolve therefore to abstain for the future from discerning Truth from Falshood, and from giving our Assent or Credit to either.

BUT you will perhaps reply, That in order to know the Likeness of Truth, we ought before-hand to be acquainted with Truth; for I can never know whether *Peter's* Picture be like him or not, unless I be acquainted with *Peter*. But the Knowledge

ledge which we have either of Truth or of *Peter* is equally uncertain; seeing we only receive it from the Ideas we have in our Minds, which, as I have already sufficiently prov'd to you, are but very uncertain Marks of the Truth of Things. And as we have no Rule of Truth, to which we may apply and compare our Ideas, the Idea which I have of *Peter* is as uncertain, as the Idea of Truth which I have form'd to my self; and I am no more sure that the Idea which I have of *Peter* is true, than I am of that which I have of Truth; as therefore when I say that the Picture of *Peter* is like him, it means no more than this, that That Idea which I have of *Peter's* Picture, doth seem to me to be like the Idea which I have of *Peter* himself; in like manner when I say, that the Appearance of Truth, which I observe in an Object, is like the Truth, I mean no more but that the Idea, which I have of that Appearance, seems to me to be like the Idea which I have of Truth.

As to what you add, that though we cannot know what is true, we may at least know what is probable; because when we say that we find in some Things an Appearance of Truth, we acknowledge and affirm it; and that when we follow this Appearance or Likeness of Truth, we give our Assent to it; and that we can therefore have no Reason to say that Man can comprehend,

prehend, and that he ought to affirm nothing, or give any Credit to it; 'twill be no difficult Matter to give an answer to it; for when I say that I find in some Things an Appearance of Truth, I only mean that I have two Ideas impress'd in my Mind, one of the Appearance of Truth, and the other of the Truth, which being compar'd together, do appear to me to be alike. Thus when I see *Peter* it immediately raises an Idea of him in my Mind, and because I cannot compare the Idea of *Peter*, with *Peter* himself, because I cannot have him in my Mind, but only his Idea; the Origin of that Idea is entirely uncertain, as well as the Likeness it has to the Thing it represents; so that I shall never know by it, at least with any Certainty or Evidence, that *Peter* is there present: Nevertheless, the Thing seems probable to me, because in other Cases those Ideas which were alike, have appear'd to me to signify a Conformity with the Things themselves.

N o w Truth being nothing else, as I said before, but that Conformity and Agreement, which is between the outward Object, and the Judgment which our Understanding forms from the Idea which proceeds from the said Object; so likewise Probability is nothing else but the Likeness of the Agreement and Conformity, which is between the outward Object and the Judgment which my Understanding forms from

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that Idea. When therefore I apply my Mind to consider the Idea of *Peter* which is within me, I fancy that I perceive in it some certain Likeness or Appearance of Agreement with *Peter* himself, and finding them alike, I pronounce that Likeness to be probable.

BUT you will say, we know at least that these Ideas are alike; but I say no, for to know is to understand with full Certainty and Evidence, but how can I know all the Ideas I have in my Mind? Many Traces, many Strokes, &c. are form'd in my Mind, without my Knowledge, or my so much as dreaming of it; a great quantity of animal Spirits is carried into my Brain, and another quantity is hurried out of it, all which are differently agitated; hence it comes that *Volens Nolens*, I both forget and retain an Infinity of Things; neither do I always find the same Vigour in my Mind, or always make the same use of my Reason, so that I cannot have the Ideas of Things always at my Command; neither am I sufficiently instructed about the Nature, the *Origin*, the *Causes*, and Extinction of Ideas; and therefore can have no sufficient Certainty of their Likeness; so that I cannot affirm that with any Certainty, which I am not well enough assur'd of.

I have, I think, sufficiently prov'd to you, that the Fidelity of the Brain is doubtful, and that we don't at all understand the Nature

ture of our Understanding. Now there are some Images in the Brain, *viz.* those Traces which are impress'd there by the Motion of the Nerves and animal Spirits, from which the Understanding forms Ideas, and comparing them together, discovers that Likeness which is between them. How can I then receive any certain and indubitable Knowledge, from such weak and doubtful Instruments? Or what can I dare assert without such a sure and indubitable Perception. When therefore an *Academick* says, that there is nothing true, that every Thing is uncertain, or that we know nothing; he doth not advance those Propositions affirmatively, but narratively; and here it is, that that Exception of *Charneades* and of the *Scepticks*, which I have else where quoted, ought to take Place, *viz.* that those very Propositions do include themselves, and that when any one says that he can know nothing, he doth not except even that which he says, and that his Discourse doth overthrow it self at the same Time that it destroys all the rest, in the same manner as *Sampson* buried himself under the same Ruins with which he crush'd his Spectators to Death.

NEITHER ought *Aristotle's* Objection, (*apud Euseb. pref. lib. xiv. cap. 18.*) to stagger us, when he says, that those Propositions by which we demolish all the rest, being uncertain and destroying themselves,

can be of no manner of use to us: For so far are they from being useless, or we from using them in vain, that they answer the very Purpose for which we bring them, if, whilst they destroy themselves, they likewise overthrow all the rest; for we never design'd to establish and maintain them, but only use them to demolish and destroy both themselves and every one else.



C H A P. XII.

Answer to the fourth Objection.

AS to your refusing our Doctrine the Title of Sect or Philosophy, we shall not be much concern'd about it; for whilst the Thing it self subsists, we shall never trouble our selves what Name you give it: You may if you please, instead of the Appellation of Sect, give it that of the *Broom* or *Scourge of all the Sects*, or the *Philosophy of not philosophizing*, as some have done; call it so and welcome, for it would but ill become us to usurp the Name of Sect, which we refuse to give to any other, since we are not better acquainted with Truth than they are, whose Ignorance makes us deny them that Title.

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WE shall easily grant that *Arcefilas* has pierc'd himself with the same Dart, with which he has pierced all other Philosophers, as *Lactantius* hath tax'd him (*Lib. iii. cap. 5.*) for then both the *Dogmatick* and *Aporetick*, that is the affirming and doubting Philosophy, will undergo the same Fate; and this Advantage we shall still have over them, that they don't know that they know nothing, and we do know it, tho' with some Doubt and Uncertainty: Besides, they never dispute with us about the Probability which we follow, but we do deny them the Truth which they are in Search of.

As we carry our Views farther then they, and have both our own and their Suffrages on our Side, whereas they have none but their own, I think we could more justly challenge that glorious Title of Philosopher than they, and have a better Right than they to the Name of Sect. Besides, they are liable to be deceiv'd, a Thing unworthy of those who assume the Title of Philosophers; but as for us who affirm nothing, and suspend our Judgment in every Thing, whilst we continue so doing, we can neither deceive our selves, nor be deceiv'd by any.

NOW whether of the two Doctrines deserves the Title of Sect best? Theirs, which taking uncertain Doctrines for true, and drawing Consequences equally uncertain from them, do dispose them into Order,

and frame them into Systems, which they afterwards maintain as true, and stick to them with all imaginable Obstinacy: Or ours, which advancing no Doctrines, affirming or denying nothing, contents it self with proposing that which appears probable to us, and advancing nothing for likely but what is so, and forming it into a kind of Web? Which of the two do you think best and safest lodg'd, those who rear a high and large Edifice with weak and broken Reeds to dwell in; or they, who having discover'd the Weakness and Rottensness of those Materials, and being unable to get any that are sounder or stronger, and fearing lest they should be crush'd by the Fall of such a Building, and buried under the Ruins of it; rather choose to retire into some hollow Rock, or some natural Cavern, and there secure both themselves and their Moveables and Provisions?

NAY, these very Probabilities may be order'd into the Form of a System, compos'd of all its Parts, and put in a Condition to defend it self against the Insults of the Dogmatists. *Sextus Empiricus* is a sufficient Witness of it, who has left us an exact Description of this modest Doctrine of the *Scepticks*, compos'd of all its Parts nicely connected and join'd together; Time has consum'd several other Works which taught the same Things that *Sextus* did.



C H A P. XIII.

Answer to the Fifth Objection.

EITHER will it be difficult for **U**s to disintangle our selves from the **D**ilemma, which you fancy insurmountable, when you argue thus: That if, when we maintain that nothing is either true or false, we speak true; it follows that there is something true, and consequently that we are mistaken; but if in affirming that there is neither Truth nor Falshood, we do not speak Truth, it follows that we are still deceiv'd, and advance a Thing which is false. This Argument amounts to about as much as that which you objected before, *viz.* that when I say that we can comprehend nothing, and that we ought to affirm nothing, I do at least comprehend and affirm that I shall therefore make use of the same Answer, *viz.* that when I maintain that there is nothing true or false, this Proposition doth likewise include it self, and is no Way excepted from the general Rule which pronounces that there is nothing either true or false.

Y O U will more plainly see, what this Argument amounts to, if we reduce it into form, as you will see presently. When I say that there is nothing either true or false, I either speak Truth or I do not ; If I speak Truth, I must have affirm'd a Falshood, when I affirm'd that there was neither Truth nor Falshood ; if what I said be false, when I affirm that nothing is either true or false, this Proposition which I advance must consequently be false, *viz.* that nothing is either true or false. Whence it follows, that whether I spake true or false, when I advanc'd that Proposition that nothing is either true or false, the Proposition it self must be false.

I N order to answer this Argument, I need but deny your first Proposition of which it consists, I mean your Major, which is as follows ; that what I say, *viz.* that nothing is either true or false, must be either true or false ; for this is begging the Question with a Witness, seeing you take that for granted and certain, which is now in Question, *viz.* that there is no Proposition but what is either true or false ; for we affirm on the contrary, that nothing is either true or false : Your reasoning therefore being founded upon this Proposition which is doubtful and uncertain, the Conclusion you draw from it must be null and void.

THE School doth give us an Example of such another Argument, which they call *Axyftates*, that is, such as cannot subsist. They suppose that a Man has dream'd, that we ought not to mind or give Credit to Dreams; upon which they reason thus: If the Man believes his Dream, he will at the same Time both believe and disbelieve Dreams: He will believe Dreams, because he gives Credit to that, and he will not believe Dreams, because he gives Credit to that which forbids to give Credit to any. If on the other Hand he doth not give Credit to that Dream, he will still both believe, and at the same Time disbelieve Dreams: He will believe them, because he doth what the Dream bid him do, *viz.* not to believe Dreams, and he will not believe Dreams, because he doth not believe that which forbids him to give Credit to Dreams. These Propositions do seem to contradict and overthrow one another; but the same Solution will serve for these, as for the preceding ones, *viz.* that this Dream, by forbidding any Credit to be given to other Dreams, doth likewise forbid it to it self; and this Dreamer will not therefore refuse to credit Dreams, because he believes in this, but only being forewarn'd, tho' not persuaded by it, he will look upon this, as well as all the rest, as false and not worth minding.

NEITHER will it be a hard Task to confute what you think amounts to a Demonstration,

monstration. The Proofs we bring, say you, to shew that there is no Demonstration, either prove it, or they do not; if they prove it, it will follow that there is some Demonstration, because every Proof that is drawn from Reason is so: If they do not prove it, there may be still Demonstrations, since the Proofs, which you bring to shew the contrary, do not prove it at all.

I N answer to which reasoning, I tell you again, that you take that for certain and granted, which we are contesting about; *viz.* that every Argument, or Proof drawn from Reason, must either prove, or not prove. When I undertook to prove that there was no Demonstration, the Proofs, I made use of, ought to be included with the rest, and so destroy themselves along with them; but you'll reply, that if these Proofs be vain and ineffectual, it follows that there are Demonstrations, seeing the Proofs which I alledg'd against it are ineffectual. I own that these Proofs are not true, since there is nothing that is certainly so: I own likewise that they conclude not with any certainty, seeing there is nothing infallibly certain; I only say that they are probable, but that which is only probable, is not infallibly sure, which it ought to be in order to amount to a Demonstration.

As for the other Argument which the *Epicureans* alledge against us, I look upon it as mere trifling and childish: They say that
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either we know what Demonstration is, or we don't know it; if we know it, it follows that there are Demonstrations; if we don't know it, we are very silly and rash to oppose a Thing which we know nothing of.



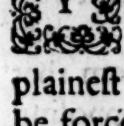
I answer, that this Argument proves too much, and consequently that it proves nothing. It proves too much, because it may be made use of against those who shall deny the Existence of any fabulous Creatures, such as *Griffins*, *Centaur*s, *Chimeras* and the like; for an *Epicurean* will say, that either they know what *Centaur*s, *Griffins*, &c. are, or they do not; if they do know, then it follows that there are *Centaur*s, &c. if they don't know, he will modestly tell them that they are a pack of Dunces, for opposing what they don't know; but tho' there are neither Demonstrations nor *Centaur*s, we may nevertheless frame some Ideas of Things that are not, and reason about them as if they did exist.





C H . A . P . XIV.

Answer to the Sixth Objection.


OUR next Objection is, That if

Y God had so form'd us, that we should

Be always mistaken, even in the
 plainest and most evident Matters; we should
 be forced to own that God was the Deceiver,
 which cannot be said or even suppos'd with-
 out the greatest Impiety: It belongs to *Des*
Cartes to answer that Objection, seeing he
 is the Author of this Reasoning, which I
 have only mention'd without approving of it;
 for our holy Religion teaches us quite other
 Things. But suppose your self to be now
 disputing with *Des Cartes*: He will not fail
 telling you, that though God had so form'd
 us that we should be always deceiv'd, yet
 would it not therefore follow that God was
 the cause of it; for since we own that he has
 form'd us of such a Nature, that we are of-
 ten mistaken, without daring therefore to
 lay the Blame on him, so neither ought
 we to do it, tho' we were always mistaken.

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BESIDES, suppose that God had actually so form'd us, that we should be always mistaken, yet would not this be a sufficient Reason for our laying the Deceit to his Charge; unless we could prove that he had likewise so made us, as that being always mistaken, we should nevertheless still certainly believe that we were in the Right; in the same Manner as we cannot call him a Liar who tells a fabulous Story as such, but he, who goes about to persuade us that it is true, may justly be call'd so; or as we cannot call him a Cheat, who sells an old House which is made up of rotten and bad Materials, but him who sells such a wretched and batter'd Building, and endeavours to persuade the Buyer that it is sound and good; we shall rather esteem the former an honest Man, if he discovers the Defects of it to the Man that intends to buy it.

SUCH we may likewise suppose the Conduct of God towards Mankind: He makes us sensible of the Unfaithfulness of our Senses, of the Deceitfulness of our Reason, the Weakness of our Understanding, and the Obscureness and Uncertainty of our Perceptions: He forewarns us by the Oracles of his holy Word, which I have before quoted, by the very nature of our Reason and Senses, and by our own Experience. For after we have found that we are often deceiv'd, we ought to think that we may be always deceiv'd, or that if it happens at any
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Time that we are not mistaken, yet we can never be sure when that is we are not so. In this God shews himself to be the very *Fullness of Truth*, and the very Truth itself; when he vouchsafes to give us Notice that we are subject to Error, and that we very often fall into it; and exhorts us by the inward and continual Motions of his Spirit, that we should look for a certain Knowledge of Truth, not from our Senses or Reason, but from him through Faith.

It would moreover prove more advantageous if God had debarr'd us from the Knowledge of Truth, than if he had left us an open and easy Way to come at it; for when we are once fully persuaded that we cannot attain to any clear, certain and perfect Knowledge of Truth, we shall be very apt to suspend our Judgment, and so shall never be deceiv'd. Whereas on the contrary, we shall be very often deceiv'd, if we hope to come to the Knowledge of Truth in this Life. Thus may *Des Cartes* defend himself from their Attacks; but it is his Business and not ours, who are far from pretending to maintain his Opinions.



C H A P. XV.

Answer to the Seventh Objection.

O M E we now to your last, and
C indeed your important Objection,
 in which you say, that our suspending our Judgment and our Assent doth alienate us from the Submission which we owe to Faith, and opens a Door to the Corruption of Manners. But we shall not be at a Loss how to reconcile Faith to Reason; and the former hath little to fear from the latter; for Reason hath its Light, tho' it be but an obscure one; but it can never draw from it, any more than from the Senses, or from Nature, all the necessary Assistances in order to attain to a firm and certain Knowledge of Truth. But as to the Knowledge which we receive from that divine Light, which enlightens our Understanding above the Laws of Nature, we ought to submit entirely to it; and when we have once receiv'd the Faith, we are bound to live up to the Precepts of it; but though we had not this holy Rule, we have the Laws and Customs which would direct us in the Conduct of our Lives.

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As to *Tertullian's* vehement Declaration in Favour of the Senses, that by neglecting them we quite overturn this State of Life, disturb the Order of Nature, blind the Eyes of Providence, &c. they are but the old Complaints of the *Dogmaticks*, and which I think I have already sufficiently answer'd throughout this whole Essay; and I think that he needed not to have drawn his Proof from our Saviour's Humanity, which being hypostatically united to the Deity, must certainly be as free from Error, as it was from Sin. As for the Apostles and other Saints, whose Deeds and Words serv'd to the Propagation of the Gospel; God took special Care to preserve in them all possible Fidelity of the Senses, and Certitude of Reason, and by his Grace and holy Spirit, has preserved them from all Error.

I likewise agree with St. *Austin*, that without Assent there can be no Faith; but then I say, that the Assent which Faith requires is of a different Kind from that which is requir'd by Reason. It is with Justice that he banishes all Doubts from the City of God, if those Doubts are brought into Matters of Faith, or any Way endanger it: He affirms that we may attain to a full and certain Knowledge of Truth by the Help of Reason; I grant it, but that Knowledge will only have the highest human Certainty. And St. *Austin* himself doth elsewhere acknowledge, that that Certainty is but weak
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and imperfect : That our Understanding being plunged into the filth of Flesh and Blood, and cover'd with the Darkneſs of Error, ſees but obſcurely, and is not able to behold the Brightneſs of Truth : But let us reaſſume the Thread of their Objection.

I F, ſay you, we reſuſe to liſten to Reaſon, we overturn this Foundation of Religion, which Reaſon had ſettled in our Minds, that *God is*. In order to answer this Objection, I muſt remind you, that we have two Ways of coming at the Knowledge of God, the one by the Help of Reaſon, and with the greateſt human Certainty ; the other by Faith, and with an entire divine Certainty. And tho' we cannot acquire a more certain Knowledge by the Help of Reaſon, than the Knowledge of God ; inſomuch that all the Arguments which the Wicked oppoſe againſt it are of no force, and may eaſily be confuted ; nevertheless, this Certainty is not entirely perfect.

HENCE it is, that the Fathers of the Church ſcarce believ'd that a Man did know God, who knew him only by Reaſon, and not by Faith ; and made ſo little account of that Knowledge of God, which we have by the Help of Reaſon alone. What elſe can *Tertullian* mean by thoſe Words I quoted before, *To whom is God made known without Chriſt ? To whom is Chriſt known without the Holy Ghoſt ? Or to whom is the Holy Ghoſt imparted without the Sacrament of Faith ?* (Tert. de Anim. cap. 2.)

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What means St. *Athanasius*, when he tells *Serapion*, that the Deity is not understood by us by Reasoning and Arguments, but by Faith, and by holy and pious Meditations. (*Athan. ad Serap.*) What meant St. *Chrysostom*, when he laugh'd at those Philosophers, who could not be persuaded that the World was created out of nothing, and yet could easily believe that God was without Beginning, and unbegotten, though this last appear'd more incredible, and that we know neither the one nor the other from Reason, but by Faith? (*Chryf. Hom. 22. in Epist. ad Hebr.*)

WHAT means *Petrus de Alliaco*, when he saith (in 1. *Quæst. 3. Lib. x.*) that though this Proposition, God is, be not very evident, and cannot be fully demonstrated; it is nevertheless naturally probable. Which Testimony is alledg'd by *Biel* (in 1. *Dist. 2. Quæst. 10. Art. 3. Dub. 1.*) when he declares, that we are sufficiently, tho' not evidently and absolutely sure, that there must be a first Being, Author of Preservation, as well as there is a first Being, Author of Creation. We may likewise bring the Testimony of *Thomas Aquinas* (*Tom. 2. 2. Quæst. 2. Art. 4.*) who says, that human Reason is very defective in human Matters, and that which plainly shews it, is, that those Philosophers who following Nature, have apply'd themselves to the Search of human Things, have been often mistaken, and often contradicted one another.

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In order therefore to bring Men to a certain and indubitable Knowledge of God, there was a Necessity that divine Things should be taught us as Articles of Faith, and as the Word of God who cannot lie.

N O W tho' we may prove the Being of a God by Arguments, which being join'd together, are of no less Weight to convince the Mind, than the Principles of Geometry, or the Theorems which are deduc'd from them, and have the greatest human Certitude; yet since so many eminent Philosophers have openly opposed those Principles, it is very plain that there can be no perfect and full Certainty, either in that natural Knowledge which we have of God, and have acquir'd by the Help of our Reason, or in that Science which is founded upon the Principles and Theorems of Geometry; but only a human Certainty, such as I spoke of before, to which nevertheless every wise Man ought to submit his Understanding: And this is no way repugnant to those Passages taken out of the Book of *Wisdom*, (*Ch. xiii. 1 and Seq.*) or the Epistle to the *Romans*, (*Chap. i. 20.*) which declare those Persons mad and inexcusable, who from the Works of the Creation, could not clearly see and understand the Power and the Godhead of the Creator; for, if I may be allow'd to use *Vasquez's* Words, (in *Thom. i. Part*) *The Holy Scriptures only intend to affirm by these Words, that there is still a sufficient Testimony of the Being of a God in the*

Fabrick of this World, and in his other Works, to make Men sensible of it; but they are not so solicitous whether that Knowledge be certain and perfect; for those Words, are seen, or are beheld, in their common and usual Signification, do signify any Knowledge of the Understanding with a determinate Consent. He adds soon after, for if any one should deny our Saviour, that which would render him inexcusable, would not be, because he might have had such a sort of Knowledge, or evident Arguments of him; but because he might have known him by Faith, and by prudent Knowledge.

'T IS not therefore without Reason that *Suarez* affirms, *That the natural Evidence of this Principle, that God is the first Origin of Truth which cannot deceive, is neither necessary, nor sufficient to persuade us, by the Faith which is infus'd in us, to believe what God has revealed.* (*Suar. Disp. 3. de Fid. Sect. 6.*) He afterwards proveth by Experience, that it is no ways necessary; for simple and ignorant Christians, tho' they have no clear or certain Knowledge of God, do nevertheless believe that *God is*. Even those Christians who are Men of Sense and Learning, as *Thomas Aquinas* has observ'd it, do believe that *God is*, before they know him by the Help of Reason (*Thom. xxii. Quæst. 2. Art. 4, and 5.*) *Suarez* goes on to shew, that the natural Evidence of that Principle is not sufficient, because that di-
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vine Faith which is infus'd into our Minds, can never depend upon human Faith, how clear and evident soever, as upon a formal Object; because an Assent of a more firm, noble and exalted Nature, cannot receive its Certainty and Evidence from one of an inferior Order and Dignity.

THIS is likewise the Opinion of *Thomas Aquinas*, and many more eminent Casuists, not only concerning Theological, but likewise concerning moral Virtues infus'd by God; which cannot, by Reason of their Dignity, be govern'd by natural Reason: Neither must you suppose this to be contradicted by the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebr.* (Ch. xi. 6.) when he says, that *he that cometh to God, must believe that he is*; for he will have us believe it, not with a natural or human, but with a divine infus'd Faith; for he had said at the Beginning of the Verse, that *without Faith it was impossible to please God*. The Fathers of the Council of *Trent* (Sess. vi. cap. 6.) understood it in this Sense. As for that Proposition of *Thomas Aquinas*, that *we believe a God, and in God, by one and the same Act*; it doth only teach us, that divine Faith, by which we believe that *God is*, comes from God himself, and not from human Nature or Reason. For as *Suarez* says, *the Excellency of the first original Truth deserves, that when the Resolution is made from the material to the formal Object, the same formal Object should not be resolv'd into*

another, but be believ'd for its own Evidence; because it can bear Witness of itself.

As to what you add, that it will follow that Faith shall depend upon Uncertainties, if the first Principles, which are known by the Light of Nature, such as this, that the same Thing can, and cannot be at the same Time, be uncertain: The last quoted Divine has given an excellent Answer to it, (*Disp. de Fid. Sect. 3. Art. 13.*) If any first Principle be found involv'd in the Consent of Faith, it shall be believ'd by Faith, and Faith shall not depend upon that Principle, as known by the Light of Nature. As for Instance, If I believe that God is Trine, I do necessarily believe that he is not one only Person, or that there are Four Persons; not from that natural Principle that every Thing is, or is not, as such; but because Faith it self, which persuades me that the Affirmation is, true, doth likewise persuade me that the Negative is false, and so of the rest.

FAITH therefore doth not depend upon those first Principles, but it supposes them as certain, with that supreme human Certainty I have spoken of; to which Certitude Faith coming to join it self, instead of that highest human Certitude they had before, they become certain with a divine Certitude, and this I have already so fully prov'd, that you seem'd to me fully persuaded of it. Hence you may easily see, that as long as
human

human Understanding doth rely upon Reason, or upon those first Principles, it can hardly maintain it self, but as soon as Faith comes to its Assistance, it becomes firm and unshaken, as I shew'd you before. Reflect, I pray you, a little seriously upon that common Axiom, approv'd and assented to by all the old Philosophers; that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, out of nothing, nothing is made.

PLATO relying upon the Fidelity and Infallibleness of this Principle, believ'd that the Matter of which the World was made, had been eternal, and *Aristotle* thought that the World had no Beginning; but Faith has both disallow'd and rejected this Principle: Why then may we not believe that the same Thing may happen to all the other Axioms of Philosophy, by the Power of God? Did not *Des Cartes* believe it possible for the Power of God to make the same Thing to be, and not to be at the same Time? Or that a Proposition should be both true and false at the same Time, and in the same Sense? Hence it manifestly happens, that when our Reason applies it self to the first Principles, though it finds in them the highest human Certainty, they still want something to give them a perfect Certitude, and that Defect is supply'd by Faith.

AND not only all those Axioms and first Principles, but all those Propositions likewise, which being of smaller Extent, do not so easily gain an Assent from us, receive all their Force and Certainty from Faith; of

this kind are many of those Propositions which we find in the sacred Writings, Councils, &c. Such is that Proposition you mention'd before, *viz.* That Christ is a rational Creature, which acquires their Certitude, not only from Reason and the Argument you propos'd, but likewise from Faith: For these and such like Propositions, that Man is compos'd of Soul and Body, That he lives, is sensible, that I live, exist, &c. since I believe, and know that I believe; all these and such like, I say, will become certain to me through Faith: For my Reason which had found them certain, only with a human Certainty, as soon as it is assisted by Faith, will find them true with a divine Certainty; so that all the Doubts and Darknes which had possess'd my Mind before, will all be dispers'd by it, and this, amongst very many more, is certainly a very great Advantage which we receive from Faith and Divinity, that it confirms our wavering Minds, and brings them to a clear, full and certain Knowledge of Truth.

BUT you will perhaps reply, That at least the Form, which we call Syllogistical, doth not come under the Dominion of Faith, and that there can be no other but a human Certitude in such a Form; that nevertheless, the Certainty of the Conclusion depends upon that Form; and that if this Conclusion doth belong to Faith, it can only have a human Certitude.

BUT

BUT you ought to understand, that the Certitude of this Conclusion which belongs to Faith, doth not at all depend upon the Certitude of the Syllogistical Form ; which, with respect to it, is merely accidental, to use the Language of the Schools ; for the greatest Divines, and in particular *Thomas Aquinas*, teach *that divine Knowledge is not discursive or ratiocinative, but simple and absolute* ; and that our Mind doth carry it self by one and the same Act towards the material Object, upon the Account of the formal one ; and that by one and the same Act we believe God, and in God ; because Faith, being once enter'd into our Mind, doth cause us to embrace and believe both it self, and what ever else it proposes to be believ'd, in the same manner as the Light doth render both it self and every Thing else visible.

IT is upon this account that *St. Chrysostom*, whose Testimony I before alledg'd, doth wisely say, that obscure Things are made visible by Faith ; and that those, which are visible, are confirm'd and made certain by those which are not visible ; and that Faith cannot maintain it self, if it doth not more certainly persuade us of the Things which are not visible, than we are of those which are so, (*Chrysost. in Hebr. xi. 2. Homil. 21.*)

As to what relates to the Motives of Credibility, which prepare the Mind to the Reception of Faith, and which must, according

ing to you, be certain not only with the highest human Certitude, but also with a supream absolute Certitude; I shall oppose to you what *Gabriel Biel* says, (in 3 *Disp.* 24. *Art.* 3. *Dub.* 1.) who pretends, that in order to the Reception of Faith, it suffices that the Motives of Credibility be propos'd as probable. Do you think that Children, who have scarce any use of their Reason, or those barbarous, rude and ignorant Nations, who have nevertheless receiv'd the Gift of Faith, do clearly and firmly understand those Motives of Credibility? No, certainly; but the Grace of God, and his inward Light, comes to help and support the Imbecillity of our Nature and of our Reason.

THIS is the receiv'd Opinion of our Divines; Reason stands in need of this Assistance of the divine Grace, not only in gross and illeterate, but even in Men of Sense and Learning: For let reason be never so quick-sighted, yet it can never impart Faith to us, unless we be inwardly enlighten'd by an heavenly Light; because, as I observ'd before, divine Faith, being of a superior Order, cannot derive its Origine from human Faith. 'Tis for this Reason that the Church condemn'd the *Semi-pelagians*, who believ'd that the first Beginnings of our Faith came, not from God but, from our selves, and this caus'd the Council of *Orange* to pass the following Decree, (*Concil. Arans.* cap. 7.) that, *if any one shall affirm that*
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Man may, or can, by the mere Strength of Nature, without the Enlightening and Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, either think in a conformable Manner, or choose, or consent to, any good Thing that is preach'd to him that concerns his Salvation, he is deceiv'd by a Spirit of Heresy.

AGREEABLE to which Decree, is that of the Council of Trent (Sess. vi. Can. 3.) if any one says, that, without the preventing Assistance and Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a Man may believe, as he ought, in order to have the Grace of Justification confer'd upon him; let him be Anathema. Such is likewise the Doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, who says, That the Light of Faith doth manifest the Things that are believed: And afterwards he says, That the Faithful have a Knowledge of the Things of Faith not after a demonstrative Manner, but because by the Light of Faith they appear worthy of being believed, (Hom. ii. 2. Q. 1. A. 4. ad 3. & A. 5. ad 1.)

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## CHAPTER XVI.

*Why the Doctrine of the Academicks and Scepticks has been rejected.*

**F**OR the Reasons which have caus'd the Doctrine of the *Pyrrhonians* to be set aside, they are far from being those which you suspect. You fancy that

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it was rejected by the *Pagans*, for fear the Sciences should fall into Contempt; tho' I have shew'd you already, that they have been very industriously cultivated by many excellent Men, who made Profession of, and practis'd this Art of doubting. You believe likewise, that it has been rejected by the *Christians*, lest it should be prejudicial to Faith and good Manners; though 'twas in *Cicero's* Time that it utterly fell, as he himself doth often mention; or rather, to speak more justly, that it was reduced to fewer Persons: But it is certain, that the *Christians* had not then as yet appear'd in the World, and consequently could have nothing to fear from the *Sceptick* Doctrine, either as to their Religion or Morals. So that it happen'd rather through that Pride which is natural to Man, who is naturally so full of, and so swelled with an Opinion, that his Reason sets him up in a Rank vastly superior to that of Beasts, that he is endow'd with Understanding, capable of Science and Knowledge, and is born to Reason, to know and understand; that he is loth to see himself stript of all these glorious Advantages, and in a manner degraded and condemn'd to the Darkness of perpetual Ignorance: 'Tis therefore impossible for Men to suffer themselves to be undeceiv'd, and forc'd out of so agreeable an Error: They prefer an honourable Folly, to a poor and obscure Wisdom; and rather than be driven by the *Scepticks* from their ancient

fancied



fancied Possession of Knowledge, as from an Inheritance which they hold from Nature; they will rather chuse to maintain it *vi & armis*, and like Ravishers of Reason, and Destroyers of Knowledge, will fight Sword in Hand, rather than act by lawful Ways against themselves, as wisely foreseeing that it would be a sure Way of being thrust out of a Possession, which they have so long and so unjustly usurp'd.

Y o u plainly see now, if I am not mistaken, how weak and frivolous all the Contradictions and Ojections of the *Dogmaticks* are: However, they might make some Impressions upon me, if we could find any one Sect of Philosophers that was free from them, or if any Philosophers approv'd of any other Sect besides their own; but since they are at perpetual War one with another we must not expect them to be at Peace with us; and since we make Profession of contradicting all other Sects, if we will deal fairly, we ought not to take it ill if we are spoken against by them; and as our Objections do not bring them out of their Errors, or make them yield to our Admonitions, they ought in Justice to give us Leave not to be surpriz'd at their reproachful Speeches.

T H E learned Sect of *Pythagoreans*, which hath attain'd to such a prodigious height of Erudition, after it had been tormented with an infinite Multitude of Calumnies and ridiculous Taunts, was at last reduc'd to nothing; whether

whether it was because *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Spensippus*, and many more, had plunder'd it of its most curious Discoveries, and having mended and reform'd them, did appropriate them to themselves, or that they sever'd from it, and collected every Thing that could afford Matter of Ridicule, and thereby gave occasion to Banterers to expose and ridicule that Sect, as *Porphyry* guess'd, (*in vit. Pyth.*) or because a certain supposititious Libel, together with some strange and odious Symbols, which were attributed to that Sect, were the Cause of their being so spoken against, as *Iamblicus* believes (*vit. Pyth. Lib. i. cap. 2.*) nevertheless, the Contempt into which it was fall'n did not hinder *Iamblicus*, whom I just now quoted, nor many more, from closely adhering to that Party, and boasting that they were supported by the divine Protection, upon which they wholly depended and rely'd.

WHAT Reproaches have not been cast upon the *Epicureans*, for having attack'd the very Gods themselves, overturn'd Religion, corrupted all Morals, banish'd Modesty, and for having authoriz'd Libertinism? It is become so odious, that the very *Jews* made use of the Word *Epicure* to signify Impudence, Lewdness, and those Places that were famous for Debauchery; nevertheless, we have lately seen a Man, who bore the Character of Priest, start up and revive this Sect, which had been abolish'd so many Centuries ago; for which he hath had the Ap-

Approbation of many learned and pious Persons. *Des Cartes* himself was not free from Censures, tho' he has endeavour'd to demonstrate the Existence of God, and the Difference between Soul and Body: We see nevertheless many Persons of all Ranks and Conditions, Men of Gravity and Learning, both profess and maintain his Doctrine.



## C H A P. XVII.

*The Conclusion.*

**I**NCE therefore the Case is such as I have been shewing you, we cannot promise ourselves a more favourable Reception from the Vulgar; but neither the Suspensions which they entertain of us, nor the Complaints that are made against us, shall ever be able to make us forsake our Resolution of following what appears to us probable, till we are drawn from it by a greater Probability. In the mean time, nothing shall force us to own that we know what we don't know, or hinder us from preferring still the Freedom of our Judgment, to the Approbation of Persons prepossess'd with their own Chimerical Notions.

YOURS, I confess, (continu'd that excellent good Man, with his usual Candor and Politeness) your Approbation, I say, would go a great Way indeed to confirm me in my Thoughts, and I should be proud of deserving it

it : For indeed that free and disinterested Method of Reasoning which you make Profession of, which runs through all Sciences and Sects without adhering to any, sufficiently shews that you have some Inclination for our Party, or at least that you are not averse to it; tho', if it should be otherwise, I should be far from opposing you, or from going about to persuade you to forsake that philosophick Freedom of thinking, which you seem to cultivate and prefer with so much Care.

I own, reply'd I, that you have made a very great Impression upon me; but 'tis a Matter of Consequence, and very well deserves to be thought roughly and maturely examin'd; tho' should any other Consideration engage me against the Doctrine, how small a Deference soever we ought to pay to Authority, yet yours would be sufficient to incline me towards you, and call me back to it. I had much rather, answer'd he, you should do it out of Friendship than Deference, lest our Diversity of Opinions should disturb the strict Union, and Uniformity both of Life and Studies, which is between us.

SUCH was the Conversation which that excellent Philosopher and I had, which, if I am able to judge of it, was neither trifling nor disagreeable; for why should I disguise it? I freely own I was not a little shaken with it.

**F I N I S.**